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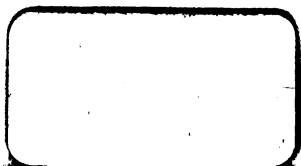
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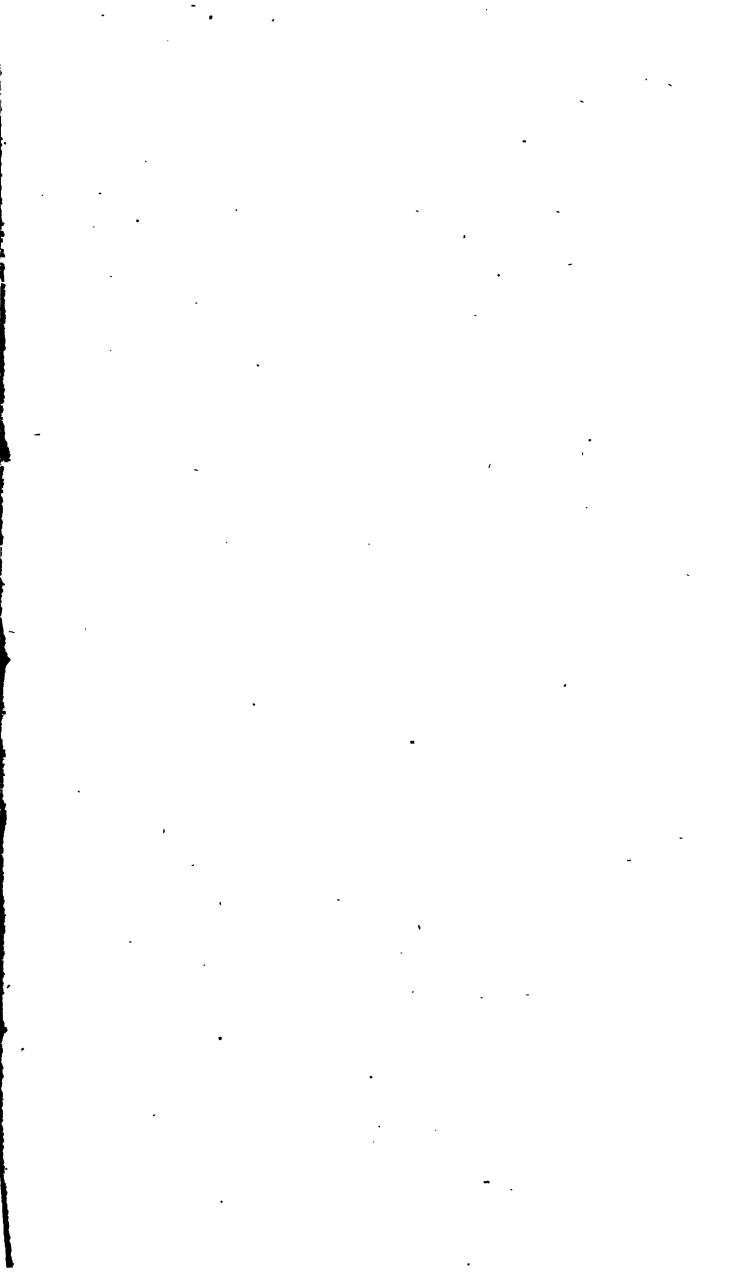
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Margaret Smith Burges.







A N N A,

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A WELSH HEIRESS.

Agnes Maria
BY MRS. BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF
ELLEN COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWELL,
&c. &c.

FOURTH EDITION.

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A N N A.

CHAP. LXXIII.

An Appearance of past Scenes.

IN the journey from London to the hill, the sensations of Anna were, at first, too strong for expression; but as they proceeded, in the language of pure and unaffected gratitude to the wise Disposer of all events, she now drew an affecting picture of her different feelings to what they were when the last time she travelled the same road. How full of sorrow and anguish did she leave her then home! how many reluctant thoughts, at quitting the friendship of the good Mrs. Wellers! how great her distress in the present, and her despair in the future, prospects! She recognized the spot

where Lord Sutton and Dalton passed her, and tears gushed from her eyes, when she saw the stile from whence she took the stage.

Now she was returning, no longer the poor orphan, flying from the horror of a prison and the tyranny of those to whose vain-glorious charity she supposed her existence was owing; or going a poor out-cast to seek her bread, in a world, where she seemed to stand alone, but triumphant, and abounding in friends, riches, and honour; overpowered with the different sensations arising from those reflections, she sunk in tears into the arms of her friend. Charmed at the whole of her behaviour, Mrs. Wellers applauded the natural gratitude of her disposition, but begged she would, at least for the present, drop all painful recollections of the past, in the opening felicity she might now justly expect, with this one reflection, which time and fifty years experience had taught her.

That patience and resignation are only
wanting

wanting to convince the most afflicted of mankind, the present calamity, be it ever so bitter, and hard to be borne, leads, in some shape or other, to succeeding good.

In this happy conclusion they reached the hill, and were there most affectionately received by Mr. Wellers, and welcomed by Dr. Collet, whose sincere congratulations, and lively friendship, a little dispelled the gloom which recollection had begun to cast over our heroine's countenance; as her mind grew composed, the fatigues of the day were visible to her friends, and painful to herself; by their effect on her health, Dr. Collet declared saline draughts, and rest, were absolutely necessary; Mrs. Clark, who attended her, anxiously urged her to follow his advice, and she retired immediately to bed, but not to rest.

Her feelings soon convinced her, however eligible to the support of a mere existence, money and friends were, the latent disease of the mind was as much out of their reach, as out of the power of medicine. Herbert, dear amiable Herbert,

were he alive, to share with her those unexpected gifts of fortune: could she have put it in his power, to add to the happiness of the worthy Mrs. Herbert, or of her dear Patty; to render him independent of his proud cousins, were a gratification worthy living for! to tell him by all her actions, how the philanthropy of his disposition, the goodness of his heart, the purity of his sentiments, now dwelt on her soul, were a happiness inferior only to heaven itself!

But of this felicity she was for ever deprived, and this, in the waywardness of human nature, was all she coveted; it was in vain she condemned her own want of thankfulness to heaven for its bounties, and attempted to sooth her ideas with the many, many sources of happiness in her power, that crowded to court her acceptance; still thought, hopeless thought, hung on his dear image, and her heart recoiled from pleasures. Herbert could not share.

In the morning her fever increased, but with appearance of its again intermitting;
medicine

medicine did little for her; a hectic habit, Collet feared, was gaining on her constitution; Mr. Mordant's anxious apprehensions were only to be equalled by those of his son's; Mrs. Wellers felt as for her own daughter: and Mr. Bently was half-distracted; a consultation of physicians was held, and he, at this very earnest request, indulged with being present; he had a smattering of physic, just enough to render him inquisitive, as an employer for others, and very troublesome as a patient himself; he would not only know the quality, but the quantity, of the prescriptions, and in the case of Anna, would himself administer them.

In a few days her fever abated, but languor and depression of spirits still continued; nothing seemed to give her either pain, or pleasure. In this unpleasant state, Mr. Mordant was obliged to leave her with Mrs. Wellers, having business of the utmost importance to transact at a distance from the metropolis, whither his son accompanied him. The evening after their

departure, she saw Polly Dalton, the friend of her juvenile years, pass by. Ah, my God! exclaimed she, how, my dear friends, could you suffer me to be so long near Layton, without once seeing, or even inquiring after Mrs. Dalton and her family! You might, answered Mrs. Wellers, have been silent about them for ever, without incurring any blame from us. Oh! say not so, madam: you know not how good Mrs. Dalton, nor how affectionate that young person, who now passed, always was to me! Pray indulge me by sending for her, who I have so often called, and who, in every instance acted like, a mother by me; for as to Lord Sutton, I am convinced they would have been still more vehement in his behalf with a child of their own. Charming girl, said Mr. Bently, though they, the Daltons, merit every punishment for driving such a mind to despair, I will myself be the messenger of your wishes—and away he went. Anna, in the meanwhile, pleasing herself with the happiness her affectionate heart predetermined to bestow

flow

flow on Mrs Dalton. Mr. Bently, however, returned without her; she and her husband were both gone to town.

Mr. Thornhill had heard of his conduct towards Anna, and sent him his discharge from the meeting; for though he had engaged to give him fifty pounds a year for life, he had the honour of his Maker too firmly at heart, to suffer that agreement to operate, as an obligation, or to continue a man in a pulpit he had endowed, who was proved to act in opposition to the divine tenets of christianity.

Despairing now of ever obtaining any employ about London, he agreed with his wife to retire to some distant part of the world, where, with the interest of her fortune, and Mr. Thornhill's annuity, they might live, and be out of the reach of any farther molestation from Mr. Mordant or his niece; a farm had been advertised to be sold in Cornwall, and they were gone from home about it. Mr. Bently knew that the earnestness of Anna to see the Daltons proceeded from the rectitude of her

her principles, and drawing a favourable omen from the interest he observed her to take in their affairs, told her, if she were not too much disappointed in her expectation of killing time, which he was grieved to see hung heavy on her hands, he would, if she would accept his company, have a little chat with her himself.

Anna could not consistent either with good nature, or good manners, decline his offer, more especially as the manner he made it, seemed to have a meaning beyond his words.

Mrs. Wellers, laughing, said, she supposed the doctor and herself were to be excluded this tête-a-tête. Oh, by no means, answered Mr. Bently; I only mean to convince this girl she is an ingrate. The wan cheeks of Anna exhibited a faint blush at his accusation of a vice she most abhorred, though the looks of her accuser spoke the kindest things; however, being seated, he addressed her in a very serious tone, charging her with the concealment of some hidden grief, which he was certain preyed

on

on her spirits; and which, if not combated with resolution, would (he meant not to alarm her, but here plain dealing was absolutely necessary) undermine her constitution, and carry her in the prime of her days, into eternity. The averted eye, and glowing cheeks of Anna, encouraged him to proceed. Whatever were the malady of the mind, which was of too sacred a nature for the participation of her friends, its consequence was ingratitude. Anna started; and seeing, in the serious cast of his countenance, he then really meant to reproach her, with tears and heart-felt sighs only could she answer. He continued: you have been, my beloved Anna, from the age of three years, to the present moment, when you are entered on your twenty first, the peculiar care of heaven; behold the providential love of that being, of whose blessings you are insensible, whose gifts you so little prize; the unfortunate death of your father, a stranger, and unknown, was instantly supplied out of the very bosom of corrupted avarice; and then

you received your education by another miracle, such as a mind and talents like your's deserved. I have myself known some women, who acquitted themselves with decency and propriety, in the character of governesses, but your Mrs Mansel, was selected by the hand of heaven, on purpose to bring to perfection the fairest blossom of the creation; through what scenes of distress, persecution, and temptation, as your life, and, what is of far more consequence, your honour, been preserved, from the verge of despair? you see yourself safe in the protection of relations, whose happiness is centered in yours; of friends, who would sacrifice any worldly thing to contribute to your ease, and who exult in the triumph of virtue over vice; is not then your continued dejection ungrateful to God, to your relations, and to your friends? you must confess it is, but I have a charge still more heinous to bring against you.

Oh! spare me, dear sir; I am very culpable, very weak; but indeed I do try to
exert

exert myself, to return, in some degree, your kindness, and Mrs. Wellers' in particular, who was so good to me, when I had no other friend; who took up the cause of my orphan and distressed state, when the world seemed savagely set against it; but fate is not to be resisted, she continued weeping, I have no heart for happiness.

Mistaken woman; it is not only to be resisted, but overcome; call forth the faculties of your mind, employ them in acts of beneficence, search out the habitations of the wretched, learn the common woes human nature is subject to, feel for the anxious mother, unable to satisfy the calls of hunger in her young ones, or let the sighs of the miserable father move thee, who mourns, perhaps, not only the loss of wealth in himself, but of honour in his posterity; see the deserted wife, callous to every calamity but the cruel one that wounds her bosom, rending the air with lamentations for the loss of her faithless husband; let your pity light on his droop-

ing head, who having hoarded the treasure of his soul, in one little casket, finds it rifled, and all his blooming hopes for ever blasted; if, he continued, you can trace sorrows like these, and such, be assured, there are in every habitable spot, seek the hapless orphan; if indeed your imagination sickens at the happiness in your power, extend it to them; for ends like these were you endowed with noble sentiments, a feeling heart, the love of virtue, and principles of justice; for them you were born, and preserved amid so many evils, and those will laudably employ your mind, and banish from thence the woes which are potent only from inactivity,

Behold these white hairs; oh, Anna! could you know, could you conceive, the sorrows they cover, you would wonder, how I have attained the age they speak. Alas! alas! time, nor change of place, nor circumstances, can obliterate them from my memory; yet robbed in the cruelest manner of all my soul delighted in, I once
gave

gave myself up to despair; despair was a flow, a lingering period, to the misery I had not patience to endure a moment. I flew to liquor, to noisy, mad, immoral mirth, but in vain was every effort; the loss of reason soon succeeded loss of peace; not, indeed, till my fortune became the prey of the abandoned crew, with whom, in the desperation of a bursting heart, I plunged into vices, and excesses my soul abhorred.

In one of the receptacles for unhappy lunatics, I should have dragged on a miserable existence, but for the love of a twin sister, who married very young, and accompanied her husband to India; she returned a widow, and immensely rich; enquired me out, took me to her house, and procured me all the assistance fraternal love, with the aid of wealth, could obtain, and I recovered to a sense of my horrible situation.

I soon recollected how my peace had been murdered, and my patrimony destroyed; the anguish of my woes renewed
with

with the idea of again mixing in the world, where my all was lost; my dear Honoria foresaw it would, she therefore proposed changing the scene by travelling; we went, wherever fancy led, France, Italy, Spain, Holland, and Germany; my reason, blessed be God, fully returned, and my sister, being severely afflicted with a painful and lingering sickness, I had the consolation of being to her, what, dear amiable woman, she had so long been to me, a soothing companion in the hour of pain; she died leaving me her heir. I still continued rambling, till at length, the infirmities of age began to overtake me, rest and a home became necessary for a petulant old man; I returned to my country not to be known, for my name is not Bently, and here, in the exercises of benevolence, I have found the first respite from grief.

The Abbey which I purchased is, I believe, going to decay; my mind finds the best employ in rendering comfortable the habitations of others; so that what company,

pany, dissipation, travel, or even madness, could not effect, the extending comfort to the afflicted, relieving the oppressed, cherishing the faint-hearted, and feeding the hungry, has done; it has banished self, and while I feel the sorrows of others, I likewise participate in the comforts I am enabled to bestow.

Let us then, said the venerable Enthusiast, resolve, my Anna, to be happy; cheer thy gentle heart by dispelling grief from those of the less fortunate; I have enough and enough, for the purposes of generous charity; not to the clamorous beggar, not to the hardened wanderer, but to the modest few, whose pride of heart, inspired by the honest dignity of inward rectitude, shrinks from the offered alm, will we turn our eyes. The dumb sorrow of those who recollect, with deep regret, the better fate of their earlier days, and who feel, in the sad reverse, pangs, to which the starving mendicant is a stranger, shall speak a language we will teach our souls to understand; nor will we
refuse

refuse to hear the faltering voice of repentant iniquity, while the still soft plaint of deserted infancy shall never be heard but to be relieved. Sweet picture of heaven, wilt thou not leave thy bed of sickness? wilt thou not exchange langour and melancholy, for joys like these?

Most gladly, dearest, honoured Sir, answered Anna, as soon as her admiration of the respectable monitor, her compassion for his misfortunes, and her entire approbation of his sentiments, would suffer her to speak; I feel, how very much I am to blame; we will lose no time; I am ready this moment to enter on the delightful task.

You must be well first, said he, pleased at the alacrity, with which his plan was adopted; and as a proof you mean to be so, you must now retire to rest, and not let the new avocation I recommend occupy your thoughts to the prejudice of sleep.

She immediately complied with this injunction, and retired for the night.

Neither

Neither Mr. or Mrs. Wellers, any more than the doctor, had before heard any part of Mr. Bently's history; his charity and generosity were unbounded, and consequently his riches supposed to be immense; but he conversed with none of the polite inhabitants of Layton, except the family at the hill, and the poor and laborious, whose interests and whose misfortunes were infinitely below the attention of the quality of the place; it was, indeed, no great wonder they should not chuse to have their pleasures interrupted by evils they had already experienced, since, with very few exceptions, they had all known in their own original, the ills of poverty and hard labour, which, as they chose to forget, they flattered themselves other people would; not blessed with understanding enough to feel, it was their present vanity, not their former poverty, that was contemptible: Mr. Bently was a man of family and rank; he had been all his days accustomed to the manners of a gentleman, but he nevertheless preferred the society of uncultivated poverty,

poverty, to that of unfeeling affluence : there was hardly a working pair in the neighbourhood, with whose affairs he was not perfectly conversant, or a child, who was not his particular acquaintance ; he had a room at the Abbey full of toys of different sorts, which were constantly distributed, as rewards to his little favourites ; he could not go two steps without having his advice asked, or his charity excited ; but this mean turn exposed him to the scorn and derision of his polite neighbours, who, after wondering and condemning till they were weary, now seldom troubled themselves about him.

His title, when he bought the Abbey, was 'Squire ; it was sunk into plain Mr. and was now got to Old Bently ; something particular in his character had always appeared, which this voluntary account of himself explained greatly to his honour.

Mrs. Wellers was too much affected, as well as himself, to take any notice of his communication, farther than her tears expressed ; Mr. Wellers, had a religious fit ;
and

and Collet had twisted his cane string quite off, when, with the salutation of the evening, they parted.

C H A P. LXXIV.

New Schemes.

AS soon as Anna was alone, she went over in her mind, the arguments, as well as history, of her noble-minded friend; she acknowledged the justice of his reprehensions, and anticipated the comforts of those amusements he selected for her, and she followed his advice in letting her thoughts dwell on the felicity it was in her power to bestow.

What transports had she hitherto deprived herself of enjoying? Mr. Mansel, that dear friend, how could she so long forget the obligations she owed him! oh, that
her

her dear maternal friend was living, to share her fortune, to guide her steps, to teach her fortitude, and direct the wanderings of her heart. The Daltons, she was determined, should be happy. Polly should live with her, and Mrs. Clark should never know care; Mrs. Melmouth should be convinced her favours were not ill bestowed; Mr. Melmouth, when he found, how strictly she had adhered to principles he had first implanted in her mind, would rejoice; and if her fortune could do it, he should have cause; it should be the business of her existence to do honour to the gracious being who, as Mr. Bently observed, had so miraculously preserved her in the first instance, and in the next, by such various and unforeseen means, expanded her understanding.

Those reflections kept her awake most part of the night, but towards morning they had the salutary effect of composing her mind, and she fell into a sound sleep, from which she awoke, animated and refreshed.

Her

Her restoration to health and spirits, was what Mr. Bently had very much at heart, he was not idle ; he had seen Mrs. Dalton, and found great difficulty to prevail on her to go with her daughter to the hill ; conscious of being in her husband's secret, tho' not a partner in his iniquitous designs of defrauding our heroine, she could not believe she was sent for, on any other occasion, than to receive the just reproaches of an injured person, who had left the house, under the double apprehension of persecution and imprisonment ; and her mortification at the severe and scornful look of Mrs. Wellers confirmed those fears, notwithstanding Mr. Bently's encouragement.

The moment Anna was apprized of her visitors, instead of ordering them up to her, with the usual vivacity of her sensations, she hastily went to them, and throwing her arms round Mrs. Dalton's neck, burst into tears.

The poor woman, equally surprized and affected, kept an involuntary silence, while Anna, in the effusions of a tender and grateful

grateful heart, embraced them both, thanked the mother for every maternal act of kindness towards her, and promised the daughter never to forget their infant attachment.

More severe to Mrs. Dalton was this unexpected goodness, than the reproaches she apprehended; but as she really loved Anna, the pleasure of seeing her in such brilliant circumstances, gave additional force to the joy her promises inspired, and she presently forgot all disagreeable recollection of past events; she repeated with the same confidence, and as little reserve as she would to her own daughter, the present situation and intention, of her husband, on whom no entreaties could prevail to accompany them to the hill, a circumstance Anna very little regretted; she ventured to promise them ample assistance, but would not settle the bounty she meant to extend to them, 'till she had consulted Mr. Bently.

Mrs. Dalton then produced the watch and rings, I before-mentioned, and the reader may imagine she was not a little struck,

struck, on observing, some part of the arms was the same with that of Sir William Edwin's; she indeed recollected young Mordant's being treated with great kindness, by the family, but never heard they were related, which being the only way she could account for the impression on her father's seal, left her puzzled but not interested; the object no longer existed, that could render her consanguinity with the Edwin's of any importance to her; and as not only her peace, but health, was dependent on her efforts to forget them, she hurried the watch into her secretary, and sent Mrs. Dalton away happy and elated with her reception.

She then begged Mr. Bently and Mrs. Wellers' advice as to what could be done with propriety for a family, who, it was not enough to say she forgave, since she actually loved them; humane and tender-hearted as Mrs. Wellers was on every other occasion, her love for Anna rendered her rather obdurate on this; but as *she* protested, her happiness was connected with
theirs,

theirs, and the generous Bently applauding her motive, she persisted ; and he, as the first proof of her obedience to her adopted father, insisted on her taking from him a paper, ready drawn and signed, containing an annuity of one hundred pounds a year to Mrs. Dalton during her life, and to her children at her death ; he would not be refused, it was his own gratification he was seeking, and he must be suffered to go on his own way.

I need not say this was the road to happiness in the estimation of the Daltons, more especially as with the same packet, Anna told them her intentions of taking Polly to wait on her, and inclosed a bill to equip her for that purpose ; Mr. Bently himself called on them, and commended their intention to remove out of the reach of the tale which had just transpired ; he advised their going as soon as Mr. Mor-dant's return should satisfy them any farther testimony on Miss Mansel's account was unnecessary.

Mrs. Clark was next dispatched, her purse,

purse, sufficiently furnished to pay her rent and other little debts, which had long hung heavy on her mind; she was instructed to part with her house and business, with all the expedition she could, and Polly Dalton joyfully supplied her place with Anna.

These matters, as Mr. Bently foretold, by employing her mind in such acceptable exercises of generosity, tho' she could not but remember,

Such things were, and were most dear,

Lessened her attention to the fatal disappointment of her heart. She wrote, as I have said to Mr. Mansel, an account of her then situation, which letter being sent while that gentleman was in town, could not be received by him till his return home; her thanks for the seasonable supply, to which she attributed the saving her life, astonished him; and the account of her leaving Dalton, her subsequent illness and distress, affected him so much, that now he knew where to find her, he resolved on a second journey to London; when he arrived at Mrs. Clark's, her religion having by the

late discovery, in which, as she foretold, she had borne an active part, being increased in its fervor, was gone to the tabernacle with her daughter; but a servant girl, they, at Anna's desire, had retained, could easily give directions to one, who was the continual theme of her mistress's conversation.

Eager to see the dear girl he so entirely loved, his tired horse was again mounted; it was then near nine o'clock, and it was past eleven when he reached the hill.

Mrs. Wellers had that evening been enjoying the triumph of truth, by carrying Anna in Mr. Bently's new coach round the several houses in the village, on pretence of returning visits; which, to own the truth, as she was pretty deep in arrears, might else have still remained in account against her politeness. At the worshipful Mr. Strap's, she had the satisfaction of looking Miss Bibbins into the most evident confusion, by asking Anna, if she had not seen that lady before? and her brother the beau, tho' he so well knew the girl at the parson's to be
a courtezan

a courtesan in high life, never beheld any thing so lovely ; he was enchanted with her beauty, charmed with her wit, and (but that was aside) captivated with her fortune, which Mrs. Wellers took care to represent large enough. Had Anna been sensible of the obligations she was under to those ladies and gentlemen, it is probable she might have been diverted at the strained politeness which was intended to cover both envy and shame ; but as, during the time she resided at Layton, her observations had been confined by her anxiety, and perfectly innocent in all her thoughts and actions, it was impossible she could suspect people she actually did not know, could find a subject either for envy, or detraction in her ; Mrs. Wellers, however, enjoyed it, and was diverting her husband with the description, when Mr. Mansel's ring at so late an hour alarmed them.

A servant announced a gentleman inquiring for Miss Mansel, and before they had time for conjecture he was in the room, and Anna at his feet, from whence he

fondly raised her, and pressing her to his paternal bosom, felt himself, and afforded Mr. and Mrs. Wellers unutterable pleasure.

At length the voluptuous silence gave way to mutual and kind inquiries after each others health; Mrs. Wellers soon understood this was the respectable clergyman of whom Anna spoke with such an affectionate warmth; her reception of a guest so welcome to her friend, was no less friendly than polite; she would not suffer them to enter into recitals of the past, that night; Mr. Mansel would want rest, and she was sure Anna's would be entirely broken, if they began a repetition of old grievances; to-morrow would be quite time enough.

Early, however, in the morning they met. Mr. Mansel's remonstrances at her unkindness in not returning to him, accompanied every painful event she then related; his surprize at her account of the note, could only be equalled by her's, at his disclaiming that, or any other knowledge of her situation, than what Wilkinson learnt.

learnt from that village ; the conjecture fell on Edwin, as they rightly concluded no other person would chuse to part with their money without, at least, having the credit of it ; Mr. Mansel very pathetically lamented the depravity of that young man, as it would, he knew, give great uneasiness to his worthy parents, and indeed all his family ; here was an opportunity to hear the particulars of Herbert's death, Anna could neither avail herself of, nor resist ; she could only stammer out the name of Herbert ; they were, he said ; as well as their late calamity would admit ; and observing the change in her countenance, which he supposed was occasioned by the fatal catastrophe of Mr. Herbert, hastily changed the subject to that of her quitting the Edwins ; he told her he had resolved not to return without her, and to take Melmoth lodge in their way, in order to know on what pretence her character had been so infamously aspersed ; that now her affairs wore so much more pleasing an aspect, it was still more necessary to clear her fame,

and as she thought it proper to wait her uncle's return, he would himself undertake that matter.

CHAP. LXXV.

A new Discovery.

WHILE they were conversing with the real satisfaction which ever attends the meeting of true friends, a very loud ring occasioned Anna to look towards the gate, when she was in the utmost astonishment to see a post coach and four, with a numerous suit of attendants, in Sir William Edwin's livery.

Mrs. Wellers and the whole family were in a bustle, while Anna looked with silent curiosity to see who would alight from the well-known carriage; her own ideas being, that it was some new contrivance of Mr. Edwin; but she was convinced of her mistake,

take, by the sight of her uncle handing our lady Edwin ; she was considering what particular end this visit was to answer ; when they entered the room, Anna ran to her uncle, who instantly presented her to lady Cecilia as her niece ; unable to account for so unexpected an act, she looked almost incredulous. Well, my dearest girl, said that lady, embracing her, may you doubt what you hear, unkind and unjust as I have been to the child of my only brother ! but my love, by a natural instinct was drawn to you, and when every art was tried to change my sentiments, still the impulse of my nature was strongly in your favour ; and my pride will be gratified, in resigning your estate to one, who promises so well to support the honour of our family.

Ah, madam, answered she, if this be true, if it is no illusion of my senses, if indeed I have the honour of being related to you, talk not of marking your acknowledgement of me, by any kind of resignation ; I shall be sufficiently rich in your love, and happy in your protection ! My

ever honoured patroness, she continued, throwing herself at her feet, permit me to add to, but never believe me capable of taking from your enjoyments of any kind.

Oh, Mr. Mordant, cried Lady Edwin, how could I ever suffer my judgment to be so imposed on by the prejudices of wicked inventions, against this amiable creature ! Rise, my love, said she to Anna, this posture ill becomes Lady Ann Trevannion ; your dear father, at the time he breathed his last at a paltry lodging, was actually Earl of Trevannion, with nothing wanting but his own claim to put him in possession of his family estate ; it is indisputably now your's ; you will not receive your right with half the pleasure with which I shall resign it ; the house of Trevannion is rich in all its branches ; my fortune is large enough to answer amply every claim of my children ; there is the copy of your grandfather's will, do you retire and peruse it ; I have, to prevent your teasing yourself with forms and old legacies, marked the passage which
relates

relates to my dear brother ; in the mean while I will beg of this lady a dish of chocolate.

Anna obeyed her aunt, leaving Mrs. Wellers not a little pleased with her guests ; the passage alluded to, she found as follows :

“ And as, from an unfortunate attachment of my son Hugh Trevannion, and in consequence of my displeasure thereon, he has withdrawn himself out of my knowledge, and if living, keeps himself concealed from his family, in fear of being again treated with a rigour I condemn myself for, it is my true will and meaning, if my aforesaid son Hugh Trevannion, or his lawful heirs, shall personally appear to make good their claims as heretofore recited, then my estates and all the hereditaments thereunto belonging, shall be immediately relinquished by my daughter aforesaid, her heirs, &c. &c. whether covert or sold ; and that she or they shall be entitled to the sixty thousand pounds before-mentioned, together with the mansion house and estate

called Dennis Place, left to my late lady by her mother lady Blanch Dennis; provided nevertheless, that at whatever time such claims be made, my daughter be indemnified for all rents, fines, and all other monies, the produce of my estate, which she may receive before such claimant shall appear; and as I write this will with my own hand, without consulting or advising with an attorney of any description, I advise and request my children to follow my example; and if neither my son Hugh, nor his heirs, should appear to claim my estate within twenty-one years after my death, then I give and bequeath the whole of my estate and fortune before recited to my daughter, &c. &c."

This extract from the old Earl's will, elucidated the remaining mystery of her family, and much more than gratified all her wishes on that head; she carried with her, on her return into the breakfast room, the watch and rings; had farther confirmation been wanting, those would have been sufficient; the family arms, which had
stricken

stricken her as resembling the Edwin's, were the Trevannion quartering, and the rings ancient mourning ones of their great grand-father Dennis, and immediately known by lady Edwin; the hair was her mother's, and the hand-writing unquestionably her father's. Mr. Bently soon after appeared; he enjoyed the dignity of his young friend with some alloy; he could not, he said, think of drawing so largely on lady Ann Trevannion for happiness, as he could on his Anna Mansel; but he could tell her, he would not give her up; he had already entered into league with Mr. Mansel; you cannot, I think, do better, said Mr. Mordant; some necessary forms, notwithstanding the Earl's injunctions, must be gone through; my niece not being of age, she will become a ward of Chancery till that period, and guardians must be appointed for her minority; I have indisputable reasons for returning to Jamaica, and Sir William Edwin thinks they ought to be chosen out of her own family, so that I apprehend you will be the most unobjec-

tionable to her friends, and the most acceptable to my niece for that office ; as far as I am consulted, I shall, I assure you, be very nice for her ; few men can deserve, tho' the instant she is announced heiress to the Earl of Trevannion, many will aspire to, her.

A starting tear would now find its way from the downcast eye of the young heiress, while Mr. Bently and Mr. Mansel were acknowledging the high honour conferred on them, in the lovely ward intrusted to their care ; the latter said he should begin his office, with the journey they had agreed on ; begin ! my dear Sir, answered she ; your guardianship, in the most valuable sense, has long been begun, I pray to God I may not live to see it end.

The chocolate removed, Lady Edwin told her she was going to town, from whence she did not mean to return till every step was taken to settle her beyond a possibility of interruption, in the possession of her estate ; we have concluded, continued she, that some altercations may possibly arise in
our

our own family, not pleasing, or necessary, for you to be troubled with ; if, therefore, this good lady can make it convenient, and you are happy here, we think you had better continue till you can be properly fixed, either with some of your relations, or in a house of your own.

Mr. Mordant gave it as his decided opinion, as she was so near being of age, if some prudent well-bred person could be fixed on, to be both chaprone and companion, her house should be established as soon as possible. The conduct of young Edwin was his private reason for wishing to place her out of that family, and any other proper one was not easily to be found.

Lady Edwin, perhaps for the same reason, did not oppose Mr. Mordant's opinion ; it was agreed, he should look out for a house, and Mrs. Wellers kindly offered to spend the winter with her in town ; this point settled, they parted, her uncle and aunt to go to town, the latter leaving her footman to wait on her niece, the former engaging to correspond with Mr. Bently,
who

who would not leave his ward ; Mansel set out on his journey to Melmoth Lodge the same day.

In the intermediate time, Mrs. Wellers endeavoured to chase from the thoughtful brow of Anna, the gloom which too often clouded her charming face, by tempting her to make frequent excursions to town, to purchase cloaths, and other appendages requisite to her approaching entrance into the great world.

Mr. Mordant, the second day after his departure, sent to request they would give their approbation of a house he had seen in St. James's-Square, which, as they were extremely pleased with it, he purchased, and accounted for Lady Edwin's silence, as he said he knew some disagreeable occurrences had happened in the family, which entirely took up her attention, and advised his niece, for the present, to avoid going to Grosvenor-Square.

A few weeks passed in preparations for her reception at her own house, and in the mean while the letters which follow were received at Layton.

C H A P. LXXVI.

Correspondents.

“ TO ROBERT BENTLY, Esq.

“ SIR,

“ I HAVE deferred writing from day
“ to day, expecting to be able to tell you
“ of the formal renunciation, Lady Edwin
“ insisted on from her children of the Tre-
“ vannion estate; Mr. Edwin, as well as his
“ sister, refused to gratify her; indeed,
“ were it not for the lovely Anna, the
“ long-boasted dignity of that ancient fa-
“ mily would wear a very unfavourable
“ aspect; Mr. Edwin has, in less than
“ twelve months, run out forty thousand
“ pounds, most part at the gaming-table;
“ and his lady, I am sorry to say, has not
“ been more careful of her character, than
“ he of his money, and is likewise extra-
“ vagance and folly itself. Miss Edwin
“ is removed to her father's house; a man,
“ who calls himself a colonel in the Rus-
“ sian

“ance; the things were only too rich
“and too elegant for a Duchefs; when I
“told them of your presents, they fet you
“down as the intended lover of the
“young heirefs, and ungraciously flounced
“off.

“So you fee, Sir, if there had been a
“poffibility of difputing my niece’s right,
“it would have been done. How lucky
“it is the difcovery was made in Lady
“Edwin’s life-time.

“I trouble you, Sir, with my beft affec-
“tions to my dear niece, and compliments
“to Mrs. Wellers.

“Your’s, &c. &c.

“J. MORDANT.”

“To Lady ANN TREVANNION.

“MY DEAREST WARD,

“THE eager defire of vindicating
“your character carried me, infenfible of
“fatigue, to Melmoth Lodge on the eve
“of the fecond day after I parted with
“you; but on entering the avenue, I was
“furprized

“ surprized by the entire change of the
“ appearance of every thing about the
“ house ; the grass was growing over the
“ court-yard ; the locks of the gate so
“ rusty, that it was impossible to open
“ them for the admission of my chaise ; a
“ clean old woman informed me, the
“ squire was abroad with his lady and
“ family, where he had been five years.
“ I then returned to the inn, very much
“ regretting the impetuosity of my nature,
“ which the efforts of reason have not yet
“ been able to correct ; for had it not been
“ for that characteristic of our country, I
“ might have learnt, by inquiring in Lon-
“ don, a journey here would be fruitless ;
“ however, as I have the opportunity of
“ the post to write, what a sudden attack
“ of the gout will for some days, at least,
“ put it out of my power to tell you of
“ the family in which you spent your early
“ years, I make use of it.

“ The landlady of the inn, where I now
“ am, immediately recollected me, and in-
“ formed me her name is Steward ; that
“ she

“ she lived first nursery-maid to you, and
“ after in the same capacity to Mrs. Mel-
“ moth’s children; she perfectly remem-
“ bered your departure from the Lodge,
“ and said, some disputes occasioned Co-
“ lonel Gorget, to leave it the same even-
“ ing, and very soon the French governess
“ was likewise discharged; she said that
“ Mrs. Melmoth’s best point and Mecklin
“ ruffles being missed immediately after
“ your departure, Mademoiselle Fragan
“ had the address to persuade Mrs. Mel-
“ moth you was the thief, and Mrs.
“ Ashby’s family not only credited but
“ patronized her at the desire of the Co-
“ lonel; that the ’squire never would be-
“ lieve it, though, as he was at that time
“ trying to reconcile himself to the Colo-
“ nel, he did not publicly say so at first,
“ but finding him not again to be won
“ to his interest, he made no scruple of
“ charging him with meanly plotting with
“ the French woman to ruin an innocent
“ girl, and that soon after he sold off all
“ his stock here, put the estate to nurse,
“ and

“ and retired to France, or some foreign
“ country; for her part, being engaged to
“ her present husband, who was coachman
“ to Mr. Melmoth, they chose to have a
“ being of their own, and have kept this
“ little inn since that time. She says, Mrs.
“ Melmoth’s family is increased since they
“ have been abroad. When I told this
“ good creature, which in the pride of my
“ heart I did, your present situation, she
“ was joyful indeed. You, my dear Anna,
“ (you have commanded me still to ad-
“ dress you by that epithet,) will not, I
“ trust, be the only person who feels not
“ happiness at such a chain of providen-
“ tial discoveries. I pray to God, I may
“ not in mine forget, what as a servant of
“ the most High, becomes, my dear child,
“ your affectionate,

“ and devoted,

“ DAVID MANSEL.”

These letters were followed by one from
Lady Edwin, which I likewise transcribe.

“ Mx

“ MY DEAR NIECE,

“ MY silence, and not seeing you at
“ your good Mrs. Weller's, must, I fear,
“ have given you reason to doubt the
“ warm affection I am proud of bearing
“ you ; my family, my dear, is wholly di-
“ vided ; no unity, no peace, and less af-
“ fection subsists among us. My son, who
“ is endowed with talents to render him
“ an ornament to his country, devotes his
“ fortune to sharpers, and his inclinations
“ to the most abandoned part of the crea-
“ tion.

“ Mrs. Edwin, if she has preserved her
“ honour, has been so exceeding careless
“ of her reputation, that she has no admit-
“ tance in the circles where I can have a
“ chance of seeing her ; and she has not
“ thought it necessary to pay me more
“ than one visit.

“ Cecilia ; oh, Anna ! I must say no-
“ thing of her ; had it not been discover-
“ ed that the independency my settle-
“ ment gave her, in case you had not been
“ so happily in existence, was now of no
“ effect,

“ effect, she would have been by this time
“ wife to an Irish fortune-hunter of nei-
“ ther birth, family, or character. He
“ was introduced by a person who, they
“ say, is a foreign nobleman, but whose
“ choice of an associate renders his own
“ character doubtful; we have removed
“ her from her brother’s, but we have so
“ little weight with, or authority over her,
“ that, as we could not prevail on her to pay
“ you proper respect, and we chose not to
“ trust her out of our own protec-
“ tion, we could not, with propriety,
“ give you the invitation we longed to
“ do.

“ Mr. Mordant is indefatigable about
“ your house; my sister Herbert, and her
“ meek Patty, will soon be in town; to
“ her, and her only, dare I now consign
“ my daughter. The counsel go on with
“ your affairs, as they say, very fast; but
“ their expedition does not keep pace with
“ my wishes; I long to see you in posses-
“ sion of your right, and your uncle de-
“ clares,

“ clares, he has a capital of thirty thousand
“ pounds to pay you.

“ Receive my congratulations, my dear,
“ and be assured, I am thankful to heaven
“ that the honour and virtues of my an-
“ cestors are adorned by such a representa-
“ tive. Sir William joins in every kind
“ remembrance.

“ Your affectionate Aunt,

“ CECILIA EDWIN.”

By this letter Anna was informed of the sentiments of the young Edwins towards her, and as she had no wish to exult at Cecilia's expence on the change in her fortune, she coincided with her Aunt's opinion, that it was most eligible to stay where she was, till her own house was ready.

Mean while the preparations for her splendid *entrée* into life filled the village with its lustre: but the case was now different; that affected look of modesty, which was so visibly a mark of the undaunted front of immorality, was changed into the sweetest delicacy; her face, which astonished the women how any man could like, became

became the beautiful index of an accomplished mind; and those ladies whose misfortune it was they could not walk out without having their delicacy shocked by the sight of a young woman, (who, if she had been all their candour suspected, certainly wilfully offended nobody,) now had a sufficient cause for exultation if they passed in the way of the slightest civility from Lady Ann Trevannion.

Alike amiable in prosperity as adversity, was our heroine; but grievous as the observation is, it is nevertheless true, with the same sentiment, person, and manners, she, who was in poverty and dependence, charged with almost every vice, and unfit for society, became an example to the women and the admiration of the men.

Mr. Mordant having completed her house, and prepared every thing for her reception, came down in her own coach, with her heiress lozenge, to fetch her; before they left the hill, he desired to have some private conversation with his niece.

CHAP

CHAP. LXXVII.

The British Merchant.

WHEN Mr. Mordant and Anna were alone, he expressed his happiness of having his wishes accomplished, in leaving her in possession of her right. I have, my dear, said he, a large sum to account with you for: and perceiving in the countenance of his niece, ever strongly expressive of the emotions of her mind, a repugnance to hear of her having any claims on him, affectionately putting his hand on her mouth, "I must stop, my dear," said he, "those effusions of a noble heart; although not a Trevannion, I am a proud Briton; Lady Cecilia Edwin cannot be more anxious to preserve the honour of her noble blood, more tenacious of its dignity, or value it higher, than I do the title of a British Merchant. Inflexible integrity, industry without parsimony, hospitality without extravagance, a noble confidence in the spirit of

commerce, and above all, rectitude of heart and probity in dealings, are the marks which always should, and in general do, distinguish our respectable body.

“ You, Lady Ann, are nobly descended on your father’s side, your mother’s will not disgrace you you must not affront a merchant by interrupting him in an act of common honesty; the money is your just right; I am too rich and too proud to accept the property of another; the uprightness of my dealings have rendered them prosperous. My son”—he paused—and looking in the blushing face of Anna,—“ I see you anticipate what I am going to say, but it is necessary you should know why he has left the kingdom without seeing you.”

“ Good heavens, is my cousin then gone!” exclaimed Anna.

Mr. Mordant proceeded—“ when first, at Sir William Edwin’s, his young and guileless heart became enamoured of you, and made proposals to marry and take you to Jamaica with him, he but made use of
the

the privilege he received from me, to chuse for himself, previous to his leaving England; I laid no restrictions on him, but with respect to the character and education of the object of his choice; my correspondent here had indeed directions to be particular on that head; but in point of settlement, I gave them their own latitude according to the merit of the lady. Rejected by you, on his return home, when I met him at the Madeiras, I found his heart still oppressed with the weight of his first disappointment; fondly anxious for his happiness, and hearing the dependent situation of the person he loved, I flattered myself, I might yet prevail on her to consent to the happiness of a youth, who, in my partial eye, deserved every thing; it was long since I had embraced my boy; and as I could not prevail upon myself to part with him so soon as the different voyages we were engaged in required, I brought him back, fully determined to omit nothing on my part that could contribute to his peace. “The discovery of

your rank was a fatal blow to our plan; sanguine, as youth generally are, he foolishly flattered himself with the contrary; he hoped—but why do I repeat what was an insult on the character of his father—which nothing but the violence of his passion and want of experience can palliate or excuse; his attachment, his love, increasing too rapidly for prudence or reason to guide, I have sent him away; I felt his sorrow—but time will meliorate the transports of youth and passion, and he will yet thank his father for not taking the advantage of—situation, to be a villain.”

The admiration of Anna equalled her gratitude; those sentiments so nobly consistent with the character he had before drawn, and those actions of probity and honour, filled her with painful pleasure, which deprived her of speech—he went on—

“ If, when his offers were of importance to your subsistence, you could with firmness reject them, was it likely they should now be accepted? Yes, Anna, dear, amiable girl,

girl, image of thy beloved mother, I know thy soul; a false sense of honour, the sacred impulse of gratitude, would have induced you to give happiness, where, for want of a parity of inclination, you could not have received it; I should have been disgraced in my son's advancement, and miserable in the reproaches of my own heart.

“ Pardon me, Anna, for thus affecting you; some apology for your cousin was necessary, and none so proper for the occasion, or so agreeable to my principles as truth; you have now my indispensable reasons for returning soon to Jamaica, although my ultimate wish is to settle in my native country; but the time when, depends on two things—my son's peace—and your marriage. Perhaps, said he, smiling, that consideration might be of some service to the happy man of your choice, whose being so will be to me his highest recommendation.

“ Mr. Bently is your warm friend; he is the noblest work of heaven, an honest man; consult him on points of judgment,

and let your aunt be your guide in point of family ; her pride has a laudable foundation. It is necessary, for the good of the common weal, that subordination should be kept up ; there may be some exceptions ; but there is in general that in noble blood which commands respect, and those marriages are most happy that are nearest equality. As to wealth, you have enough for both ;” and then tenderly embracing her, he left her, to prepare for their little journey.

Mrs. Wellers, on entering, found Anna in tears, and inquired with great anxiety the cause, which our heroine repeated with a mixture of delight and affection ; and both ladies did ample justice to the principles of the British Merchant.

C H A P. LXXVIII.

A Fashionable Entrée.

THE time was now arrived, when Anna was to be introduced into what is called life ; sensible, accomplished, beautiful, rich, and nobly born, were it possible she could be less than the rage ? Her jewels were superb, her house elegant, equipage splendid, and furniture in the highest taste ; in her domestic establishment, happiness and decorum were more consulted than shew or grandeur, although there appeared no deficiency in the latter. Mrs. Wellers was so obliging as to make her home with her ; Mrs. Clarke was her housekeeper, whose daughter she permitted to live as assistant to her mother ; Polly Dalton was her woman, and her other domestics were sober and orderly.

Sir William and Lady Edwin went to her house the moment she arrived ; his honest disinterested soul felt not a thought

of displeasure towards Anna ; though we will not pretend to say, he would not have been as well pleased to have retained the acres ; he, as I have said, fondly loved his children ; notwithstanding his dissipation, he gloried in his son ; that young man was a phænomenon ; he had made a speech against the minister the day before, that lasted two hours and a half, in which he displayed such a knowledge of the constitutional law, such intelligent wisdom, and such sound judgment, as astonished the house, though he had not been in bed two nights before ; could the faults of such a son be remembered, by such a father ? no, it was for him and him only, he regretted the Trevannion estate, and more liberally than ever supplied his extravagance.

The Thursday following, Lady Anna was introduced at court by Lady Edwin ; and here, though superior to the sheepishness, which little minds often mistake for modesty, she felt herself awed and abashed ; and at the instant the Queen entered the circle,

circle, her trembling limbs at first refused their office.

But when she ventured to look up, when she met the mild and gracious eye of the best, as well as first of women ; when the benevolence which shot its beams from her countenance reassured her, she was sensible only to those feelings a loyal heart, and none but such, can describe.—Who, indeed, ever felt in that august presence, but that respect and awe were blended with love and admiration ?

And here only it was that her grace, beauty, and modesty, could be eclipsed.

Pride of the British nation, beauteous blossoms of a court, by your presence rendered the brightest in the known world, into whatever clime, by the policy of nations, ye are transplanted, if the blessings and prayers of a people, whose rising hopes ye are, be answered, you will experience the peace and prosperity so sacredly promised to the children of the righteous, and so amply merited by the graces of your own lovely forms, and the innate virtues

of your souls ! yet will the tears of sensibility drop over the unavoidable separation, and regret follow the parting steps of the children of our beloved sovereign.

The buzz of, “ who is that ! charming creature ! what is she ! ” together with some anecdotes of Anna’s history that had transpired, rendered her person, dress, words, and even looks, objects of curiosity and attention ; her beauty became the topic of conversation among the men, as her dress did among the women. Compliments and congratulations flowed from every tongue ; and the eye of Majesty glistened at the sight of a young orphan, thus restored to the dignity of her blood.

Her doors were thronged with visitors, and her porter’s roll was too voluminous for her own inspection. She appeared at the opera : she had been seen there before, when a few of the ornaments of Fop’s alley had bestowed from their dear selves so much attention as to swear, she was a devilish fine girl, a good piece, a charming creature ;—they had done more, they had even asked
who

whō she was ? but that was the last stretch of expiring curiosity ; a poor Welch parson's daughter, a companion to an old woman ! horrid, contemptible, how could the pretty things be drawn in to bestow a moment on such an object ? She attended Lady Edwin to that seat of elegance over and over after, without exciting a single glance : in this neglect, indeed, she had the comfort of seeing almost every fine woman included, those of a certain description only excepted ; the beaux of the present age are not very famous for their attention to modest woman nor indeed any women at all.

Now her entrance into her box was honoured by the general notice of the audience ; the men all lost their hearts, and the ladies were most of them her very dear friends : in fine, the lovely young heiress was the fashion.

But in those scenes of shew, pleasure, and ceremony, which daily increased in their demands on her time, she neglected not her friends, nor were the claims of distress forgotten ; the first part of the day, she said,

was her own, the remainder the world's; and her real ideas of the duties of humanity, and the calls of the unfortunate on her affluence and power, were too potent to suffer mere form or dissipation to deprive her of the secret approbation of her own heart.

In spite of whatever taste, fashion, and example could urge, though an enthusiast in music, Anna preferred weeping with Siddons, or smiling with Abington, to the hearing an effeminate being in an Italian opera trill out woes, it was impossible *it* could have a natural idea of.

Another very unfashionable and ridiculous custom she obstinately adhered to, which was that of satisfying her mind with one entertainment in one evening, and returning home when it was ended. Dancing was her favourite diversion, and might perhaps, sometimes, have carried her to the midnight hour, had her spirits been such as would suffer her to partake of it,

Mr. Mansel returned from Somersetshire, after a month's confinement, but was
not

not suffered by lady Ann to go to Wales ; in the summer she promised to pay her last respect to the remains of her dear friend at Llandore, to whose memory she caused a black marble monument to be erected over the spot where her beloved governess was buried ; she had likewise made strict, but fruitless inquiry, for the place where the body of her father had been interred, and given orders to erect a magnificent mausoleum at Trevannion chapel, in commemoration of his death and misfortunes ; she made Mr. Mansel her domestic chaplain, and the guide of her actions ; her uncle and Mr. Bently had a house between them ; the latter growing more attached to our heroine the longer he knew her ; he was her almoner and her partner in every charitable donation.

Lady Edwin was her constant visitor, and so good as to excuse her punctual return, on account of Cecilia, whose rancour was out of all bounds ; Mr. and Mrs. Edwin seldom came in her way, as her intercourse was wholly among the amiable of one sex, and the moral of the other.

C H A P. LXXIX.

Proves that Riches will not do every Thing.

ANNA's town establishment being completed, the many offers of marriage, which were rejected as soon as made, served only to convince her of the wedded state of her heart, which no change in life was able to wean from its first dear object; his death, of which she entertained no doubt, fixed her resolutions as to matrimony.

While Herbert lived, she had not presumed to indulge a hope of being united to him, though she flattered herself she might cherish in her secret thoughts the unconquerable affection she bore him, without injury to the happy woman who was destined to share his heart and bear his name. All he said, or did, was, in her partial eye, the standard of perfection; with him imagination rested, and with him hope died, and still her hours of retirement were devoted to the fond remembrance of some or
other

other of the scenes she had passed in his society ; she was amusing herself in a melancholy revival of past happiness, when Mrs. and Miss Herbert were announced.

Agitated by her own hopeless thoughts, her face pale as death, with the deplorable impressions of grief and despair on her mind, she very much disappointed those ladies, who expected to see the change in her fortune marked by the life and gaiety of her deportment.

Patty took her passive hand, and congratulated her on the happy discovery of her rank ; Mrs. Herbert said all that true benevolence could dictate on the state of her affairs ; the sable hue of their dress went to the soul of Anna ; it was some moments before her sensations would suffer her to articulate, and even then the power of speech was preceded by a shower of tears ; when this was subsided, she returned, in the most graceful and endearing manner, the civilities of her friends, recollected the past goodness of Mrs. Herbert with grateful acknowledgments, and her heart re-claimed

claimed its alliance with Patty ; she ordered herself to be denied to every body, and enjoyed, in the unrestrained society of her old friends, the real advantage of wealth and independence ; she blamed herself for not writing to them ; but yet, said she, in a trembling voice, not able with all her efforts to restrain her tears as she glanced her charming eyes over their mourning—what could I say ?

Mrs. Herbert, much calmer in her grief than Anna expected, answered only by a deep sigh at this hint ; and Patty's eyes filled, but, as if glad to be relieved from the painful subject, made no answer, and the conversation was stopped, till resumed by Mrs. Herbert's apologising, in her turn, for her silence, by assuring her, however unaccountable it might seem, Lady Edwin, when she informed them of her brother's heiress being found, dropped no hint it was their dear Anna.

“ And Mr. Wilkinfon,” interrupted Patty with glowing cheeks, “ does not know “ it yet.” They then began to talk of Llandore ;

dore ; Mrs. Herbert spoke highly of Mr. Wilkinson, and expressed herself under great obligation to the goodness of his heart ; his praises were re-echoed by Patty, with a warmth both of speech and colour Anna could not help observing.

Mrs. Herbert declined staying the evening, having engaged to return to Grosvenor-square early ; but she permitted her daughter to stay, as they were to quit town very soon, and the young ladies were anxious to pass as much time as their engagements would allow together.

When alone, these amiable women again embraced, and unbosomed themselves to each other.

Patty accounted for the manner in which Anna had been discarded from Grosvenor-square, and how her note had fallen into Miss Edwin's hand, whose unkindness to Anna was but the counterpart of what she had herself experienced from her ; she however hoped, when they were married, her brother would have influence enough to induce her to leave her London manners behind

behind her, when they went to Wales. She was proceeding—

“Your brother! said Anna, with every mark of astonishment; “is your brother then alive?”

“Alive!” answered Patty, smiling; “why what can possibly induce you to ask? yes, thank God.”

“For whom then,” said Anna, “do you wear such deep mourning?”

“Oh,” returned Miss Herbert, “I have not yet told you half the sorrows we have known since I saw you; my poor papa—but I must tell you all, and how charming your old lover Wilkinson has behaved to us.” She then in her ingenuous, artless manner, related the arrest of her father, the accident to Tyrrel, Collet’s goodness, and Charles’s exile.

The agitation, the hopes, fears, and expectations of our heroine, during this relation, cannot be described; but her mind was in the end settled with respect to young Herbert, by the conclusion of the narrative.

“When,” said Patty, “my aunt found her
her

her brother's lawful heiress appeared, she wrote to mamma, and I believe, if the truth were known, communicated some imprudent conduct of my cousin's ; but at the same time told her, Cicilia still avowed her partiality for my brother, and therefore, as she would yet be a great fortune, which my aunt dreaded might subject her to the designs of bad people ; and as so great a dismemberment of the estate would prevent Sir William providing for Charles in the manner he had proposed, she conjured mamma to forward the marriage they always intended should take place, which, with great reluctance, she undertook ; what passed between her and my brother, I can't tell ; but he has agreed to oblige her, and we are come to town to meet him. We go to Dennis Place *en famille* ; they propose the wedding to be celebrated immediately on our arrival there."

This conclusion gave Anna a flow of false spirits ; her pride assisted her to conceal from the sister her fond, and as she then esteemed it, weak attachment to the brother ;

brother; her exertions to entertain her friend the remainder of the evening were uncommonly vivacious; and strength of mind did that for her, which art never could; it gave her the appearance of ease, when her heart was bursting.

Patty regretted very much, decency would oblige her to return with the hymeneal party to Dennis place; she promised to be a punctual correspondent, and pay a visit to Anna as soon as she could get off; Mr. Mordant attended her home, and returned with the news of Mr. Herbert's arrival in Grosvenor-square.

Mr. Mansel, who was present, saw all his former suspicions of Anna's attachment to young Herbert confirmed in her true-speaking countenance at this information, but suffered not a thought to escape him; she presently retired to her apartment, and, dismissing her woman, threw herself, almost suffocated with grief, and gasping for breath, on the sofa.

“ Alive! is then Charles Herbert alive !
“ does he then yet exist? and can it be ?

“ restored

“ restored from death, he lives, indeed, but
“ to what end? and is he at last to marry
“ Miss Edwin?—poor young man! had he
“ not been happier wedded to his grave?
“ —then pausing—not his own choice
“ neither—that might have led him—but
“ gratitude—Oh, what a substitute for
“ love! how indelicate must be the mind
“ that can accept it!—how ill paired will
“ theirs be! yet, why do I say so! what
“ right have I to suppose their attachment
“ is not mutual? would he else have
“ entered with such alacrity into their
“ scheme! Ah! no—why then do I suffer
“ a hopeless, unrequited passion thus to
“ afflict me, to embitter my moments, and
“ render me wretched in the midst of en-
“ joyments? Oh, why does memory, too
“ faithful to my sorrows, for ever remind
“ me of his perfections? but I have long
“ resolved never to marry; and will it be
“ a greater crime to love, to adore him,
“ when I have it so amply in my power to
“ serve, than when poor and destitute, I
“ had but my prayers to give him? let me
“ hope

“ hope not—let him then marry Cecilia ;
“ his children will, perhaps, inherit my
“ estate ; I will, at all events, be a sister,
“ a faithful friend to him.” With those
ideas, she flattered herself she had composed
her mind ; but sleep again forsook her, and
her fallen eyes shewed her attentive, and
watchful friends how ill she had rested.

Anxious to fly from herself, when the
newspaper, in which were announced the
arrivals at Bath, was brought her, a sud-
den hope, by change of place, to procure
the tranquillity she could not expect, where
the Edwins, and their concerns, must come
to her ears, she proposed an excursion to
Bath ;—she was sick of London—Would
Mrs. Wellers go ?—“ Hey day !” cried Mr.
Bently, “ and pray what is there in Lon-
don to sicken your whimsical ladyship you
will not find in Bath ?” “ Well,” answered
she, affecting gaiety, “ I am determined
to try your gallantry ; what do I keep so
many old men in my train for, but to
exhibit their folly in following me ; uncle,
will you go ?”

“ Are

“Are you serious?” he answered.

She assured him she was; and Mrs. Wellers declaring it was the only scheme in the world she should like, if it were agreeable to Mr. Wellers, he was consulted, and every thing settled for an excursion to Bath.

CHAP. LXXX.

The Journey postponed.

ANNA, always quick in her ideas, and rapid in putting into execution resolutions once formed, and willing to avoid Mr. Herbert and Cecilia, they were on the point of setting out for Bath, when a messenger came to beg Lady Ann's presence in Grosvenor-square.

She had several times been at Lady Edwin's public and private parties; in the first, Miss Edwin did not at present appear, and in the last she had not ever chosen to mix;
but

but the hurry of this summons alarmed her, and her alarm was increased by Mr. Mor-dant's servant bringing the news of a duel, and intrigue, which, though no names were mentioned, plainly pointed at young Edwin and his lady. The carriages, which were drawing up at the instant Lady Edwin's servant arrived, were now ordered to put up, as the journey must be unavoidably postponed, at least a few hours, and Anna went in her's to Grosvenor-square.

She alighted; the servant was followed by Mr. Herbert; but oh, how changed! his fine face, where light-hearted joy was wont to dwell, overspread with grief, and wan with care, his eyes yet charming, retreated from her earnest and inquiring looks; deep sighs rent his bosom; his hand trembled almost to convulsion as he led her, still turning from her his averted eyes to Lady Edwin's dressing-room, where a scene presented itself, which beggars all description.

Mrs. Edwin, in a gay masquerade habit, pale as ashes, and weeping, was leaning on
Cecilia;

Cecilia ; Lady Edwin, on a sofa, just recovering from an hysterical fit ; Mrs. Herbert vainly endeavouring to comfort them. The moment Lady Anna entered the room, they all seemed to feel their grief renewed.

Oh, Anna ! said Lady Edwin, my son, my dear Hugh, is no more ! and what is worse, he has embued his hands in blood ; he is not only murdered, but is himself a murderer !

Anna, shuddered at this dreadful account given in broken intervals of grief, amid the groans of the whole family ; she could administer no consolation ; her spirits low when she left her own house, and weakened at the sight of Herbert, were now too much overpowered to be supported ; she fainted away.

On her recovery, she found Mrs. Herbert, and Patty, were only remaining of the distressed group, she saw on her first coming ; her eyes vainly explored the room ; the object in which they delighted was no longer seen ; she could hardly believe but what had passed was an illusion of

her senses, that she had not seen Herbert at all.

Mrs. Herbert, as she recovered, informed her of the fatal event which so distressed them ; she said, Mrs. Edwin drove there about nine, habited as she had seen, and in a state of terror and distress bordering on distraction, she told them she went last night in a party to the Hay-Market, and by some accident missed the lady who was her companion ; but supposing she could not fail of meeting her again, she danced with a gentleman, Count Maxwell, who was of their party, till day-light ; not, however, meeting again her friend, and the rooms being clearing, they went to the house of the lady they had lost ; finding, to their surprize, she was not come home, they agreed to have some coffee, and wait her return ; but tired and fatigued, they had both dropped asleep, from which they were awakened by company gaily running into the room, who, when unmasked, they found to be Mr. Edwin and her friend Mrs. Corbet ; high words ensued between the gentlemen, who
went

went out, regardless of her prayers and cries, to decide the matter; the servants said, they got into the coach which brought Mr. Edwin and Mrs. Corbet home, and ordered it to Hyde Park, whither Sir William immediately ran, where he heard the gentleman in the white domino, whom Mrs. Edwin affirmed to be her husband, was killed on the spot, and that the other was said to be mortally wounded; but, Mrs. Herbert added, that this dreadful catastrophe was rendered somewhat doubtful, by a messenger from Mr. Edwin's, informing Lady Edwin, it was the Count who was killed, and that Mr. Edwin was alive; the distracted parents were gone there attended by her son.

On hearing that the Count was no more, Mrs. Edwin was fallen into strong convulsions, and was carried senseless to Cecilia's apartments.

Such a complicated scene of distress could not fail to shock the gentle soul of Anna; sensibly affected by the voice of woe, wherever it met her, it here had the

double claims of blood and friendship ; yet her own heart, torn with conflicting passions, she was badly qualified for the office of comforter to others. When the news of her son's misfortune reached Lady Edwin from her own daughter's hard heart, she had small hope of consolation ; the bosom friend of a woman, whose conduct, allowing her story to be a real recital of facts, had blameably involved her husband in a duel, how could she open her heart, or unveil her suspicions to her.

Next to her in point of affection, and far higher in esteem, stood our heroine ; when unexpected calamities strike the soul, it wishes to look out of the poignancy of its feelings to the resources of friendship, and dreadful is the situation of that being who looks in vain. Mrs. Herbert, indeed, was present ; but Mrs. Herbert's misfortune and dependence took from her the weight she would else have had ; Lady Edwin, therefore, in her first agonies, sent for Anna, although she regretted that hasty step, when she saw her so affected.

The

The instant after a messenger coming from Portman-square, she reluctantly left her niece to the care of Mrs. Herbert, Charles attending her; Miss Edwin, now running into the room, frightened out of her sullen, supercilious airs, begged Mrs. Herbert's assistance; Mrs. Edwin being, she believed, dying; two gentlemen in the medical line, a physician and apothecary were with her, but a third was necessary; the convulsion had brought on an abortion, without restoring her senses, and she lay a pitiable victim to the consequences of those deviations from honour, she would a few hours before have laughed at.

Mrs. Herbert begged Anna to retire to Lady Edwin's dressing-room, ordering her woman to attend; she was a sensible well-behaved person, who had lived there when Anna was Miss Mansel, and took that opportunity of paying court to her by her assiduity and respect; but Mrs. Herbert had hardly left the room, before this attendant was summoned to her Lady at Mr. Edwin's.

Left alone in momentary expectation of

something still more alarming, she endeavoured to recollect her scattered thoughts; the wanderers of themselves adverted to one object; notwithstanding the horrors that surrounded her, Herbert was present to her imagination, yet, self-condemned, she was trying at fortitude, when the door suddenly opened, and Herbert hastily entered.

“ I thought my mother was here,” said he—when seeing Anna alone and in tears, his confusion, his trembling returned; she had asked him twice after Lady Edwin and her son, before she could perceive the least attention to her question, at last she answered with a voice of tenderness :

That the horrors of the morning were such as gentleness like her's should not witness; he entreated she would permit him to wait on her home; Lady Edwin, continued he, is too mournfully engaged to return soon; Mrs. Edwin is unworthy to harass you with her merited distress; let me, dear Lady Anna, then lead you from this scene of sorrow; and, oh, said he, with agitation too strong to be suppressed or concealed, that

that it had been my blessed fate to have preserved you through life from every ill ; to have watched over and protected your beauty and honour. Withdraw not, dearest creature, this hand, perhaps held for the last time, by the most miserable of men ; withhold not from me the comfort of unfolding to you the exquisite misery which will most assuredly destroy me.

Anna, hardly less affected than himself, however remembered both their situations.

Engaged to Cecilia, could he dare approach her with professions of a passion inimical to her honour ; were she not free when he voluntarily submitted to enter into that engagement ! yet had he not obliged her to exert her endeavours to tear him from her memory ! pride and passion both called on her now in this arduous moment, (when her own heart was melting with tenderness, she saw before her, almost speechless with agony, the first, last, and only object of her love) to be resolute ! assuming, therefore, as much composure as ingenuity, like her's, could put on, she said, she should certainly

ly go home, though (haughtily) she would not trouble him for an escort ; Miss Edwin had just left the room in a situation which entitled her to all the tenderness he seemed inclined to throw away on her.

Notwithstanding all her endeavours, the moment she uttered this sentence, her pride, her reason, were too weak to support her in a conflict so interesting, her heart again sunk, and her voice was lost in the last sentence.

Herbert, with a bow he meant should conceal his emotions, then let go her hand.

She hastily quitted the apartment, and throwing herself into her carriage, was carried home in a state of mind neither to be conceived nor described ; the fatal news had been confirmed in St. James's-square, and Mrs. Wellers, in great uneasiness, waited to see or hear from Anna.

Her dejected looks, and faint voice, threw Bently into a rage ; he wondered what possible end it could answer to send for her to such scenes ?

She retired directly, accompanied by her friend,

friend, in whose bosom she wept without communicating her sorrows; not that she had any objection to unveiling her inmost thoughts to that worthy woman, but the indelicacy of suffering her peace to be broken by a man, who had never made any efforts to obtain her hand, and who was engaged to another, restrained her. Mr. Mansel gently rapped at the door, and was admitted; the good man had long seen, with great pain, all was not at ease in the heart of his child, as he yet called her; he entreated her to unbosom her grief to her friends, and led himself to the subject of young Herbert and his intended marriage.

Soon was Mrs. Wellers convinced that there the malady lay, but she was much surprized at Mr. Mansel's mentioning his marriage with Miss Edwin as an irrevocable engagement, for Collet had always made her the confidant of what passed between him and Herbert, which she had not repeated to Anna, having given the doctor her honour not to do it; and never hearing Herbert's name mentioned, she little sup-

posed him of consequence to the peace of her friend, whose silent anguish now fully explained the source of her uneasiness; but as she avoided answering their kind interrogatories, and appeared uneasy, they persuaded her to try to take some rest, to which she the more readily consented, as she wished to be free from their well-meant though officious inquiries.

CHAP. LXXXI.

Masquerade adventure concluded.

THE moment Mrs. Wellers was alone with Mr. Mansel, she revealed all she knew of Herbert's attachment to Anna; he was not only surprized, but grieved, to find, from her account, two such amiable young people, with no other obstruction to their being completely happy, than what mere obedience to the will of others had raised, were likely to be miserable in their separation;

ration ; he well knew the inflexibility of the Edwins on points in which they conceived their honour to be concerned, and he as well knew the nice value Anna set on propriety and delicacy, which were all against the most distant hope of the long concerted match being set aside ; and he foresaw, he said, with youth, beauty, rank and riches, Lady Anna had not yet gone through all her days of probation ; such was the imperfect state of all human bliss, that as the affliction of a corrupted world, led often to blessings, so its attainments were as often productive of ills, more painful to the human mind, than any of the train of common events, which daily and hourly visit the poor and laborious part of the creation.

Another messenger from Sir William brought a note, which requiring an answer, they were obliged to risk disturbing their friend.

It was from Lady Edwin, again requesting to see Lady Ann, and dated Portman-square ; before she had read it through, Mrs. Herbert was announced.

Her looks indicated terror and grief; she begged Anna, if it were possible for her to support such a scene, to go with her to Mr. Edwin's; he is dying, said she, but declares he cannot leave the world, without seeing you; his paroxysm from pain has been short, till within this half hour; the mortification is already begun, and he lies free from those agonies which might have affrighted you too much; for God's sake, if you can bear it—come.

Anna wanted no farther entreaties, but Mrs. Wellers insisted on accompanying her there, and Mr. Mansel begged to follow them.

When they arrived at Mr. Edwin's, a dismal silence reigned through the house; the hall, which was hitherto filled with ill-governed footmen and their associates, was now wholly deserted; the porter rung a bell, when Bates, with a countenance of grief, ushered them through the magnificent rooms, into one in which Lady Edwin sat, with her eyes half shut, in silent agony by the bed's side, holding one hand of her beloved

beloved son, Sir William kneeling on the other; drops of sorrow rolling in quick succession down his cheeks; Miss Edwin and Patty behind Lady Edwin's chair, against which their faces were both hid; and on the bed, supporting the dying man, and wiping the sweat from off his forehead, sat the elegant, but emaciated form of a lovely woman, whom Anna had never yet seen; two surgeons stood at a distance from the bed, venerating the grief of a virtuous pair, mourning their son cut off in the prime of youth, by the horrible consequences of his own vices.

When Anna approached the solemn scene of woe, Lady Edwin, with a look that went to her soul, extended to her the hand she had at liberty, and grasping it a moment—unable to speak—at length, looked at the lady who supported Edwin, she understood her, and with a voice choaked with grief said,

The lady is here, your cousin is come; will you not now speak to her! come, my beloved Hugh, ease your dear heart!

He

He immediately looked up; a faint gleam of satisfaction shone out of his languid eyes, already dim with the approach of death; after a short silence, in which he seemed to be recollecting himself:

Oh, Anna! said he, with a bitter sigh, is it thus after all my plots and schemes I now see thee!—yet, even now, I delight to look on thee! it is a cordial to my departing spirit, that I see thee—innocent, and virtuous; I thank the God of mercy, who protected thee from my arts. Say, Anna, say cousin, can you forgive me? will you pardon the ills you know, and the many you do not know, I had contrived against the purity of an angel? speak to me, and pray for me; the prayers of such a soul must be acceptable!

Anna, whose heart never harboured anger beyond the passing moment, kneeling at the feet of Lady Edwin by the bed-side, solemnly assured him of her perfect forgiveness, and wept her concern at the fatal event; she solemnly promised, at his request, to comfort his parents.

You

You only, said he, are worthy of the tenderness of such hearts as theirs ; be to them what I ought to have been. His sister then caught his eye ; Cecilia, he added, take the warning your brother gives you, be virtuous and be happy ; feeling now the tears of his supporter drop on his face, oh, Angelina, said he, I have not deserved this tenderness from you, do you forgive me too ?

Forgive you ! Edwin, answered the unhappy woman ; do you forgive me ? my unbounded love drew you into my own ruin ; had I not fallen, you might have been happy.

Protect her, languidly looking at his father ; and again at Anna, adieu thou last cheering object of my thoughts, be in all thy ways blessed ; then, as if on recollection, where is your Mr. Mansel ?

He is, answered Anna, with a pleased earnestness, in the house, will you see him ?

Yes !

She flew out of the room to fetch him, and then he desired to be left by all, but the lady and the clergyman ; they complied,

plied, each choosng separate apartments, except Cecilia, who was so much shocked at the approach of mortality, she would not be left a moment alone.

A dead silence reigned through the house, which in ten minutes was awfully interrupted by people passing quick in Mr. Edwin's room, and that then again succeeded by a profound silence.

Mr. Mansel soon after entering Lady Edwin's apartment, she knew all was over, and Mrs. Herbert, assisted by him, then attending her ; Anna and Mrs. Wellers returned home, leaving the body to the care of young Herbert, from which sad remains the lady would not stir.

The wretched Mrs. Mitford was accidentally passing in a hackney coach to her lodgings at Brompton, where she lived, patiently waiting, in a deep decline, the last great change ; at the moment the bleeding and expiring Edwin was carried home, resigned to her own fate, and at peace with a merciful God, this sight of a man she had doated on, was too much for her reason ;

son ; grief and consternation gave her strength ; she stopped the coach and flew to him ; his eyes, their lustre lost in the approach of death, recognized her injured form ; his head sunk on her bosom, and those feelings of humanity and justice, which his dissipated life had conquered, were now revived ; he implored her forgiveness, who in this moment had no other consolation, but, that in death, she should not be divided from him, who she had adored when living—she accompanied him home.

This was no time for form, or prejudice ; the pity Lady Edwin always felt for the unhappy Angelina was not lessened, by seeing her weak efforts to support her dying son ; she invited her home, but the sorrowing woman declined her kindness ; she continued with the corpse till it was removed from the house, and in one month her own was, at her last request, deposited with it.

C H A P. LXXXII.

The Retrospect.

MRS. Corbet, who I have already introduced to my readers, was a voluptuary of fashion left early in life a widow, without guide or principle to regulate her conduct; and having been unkindly used by her husband, she vowed never to marry again, which vow reached not to the exclusion of modern gallantry; in that she had indulged till all the lovely attributes of the sex were destroyed, modesty was no more, and every sense of delicacy lost in the constant gratification of vicious passions; her own person was lovely, and being, from long practice, perfect mistress of the art of pleasing, her intrigues were numerous; but as the heart had seldom its share in them, they were consequently of short duration.

The day she dined with Mrs. Edwin, in company with her husband, had been fatal

to her peace ; and the indifference with which he received her advances, while it excited her anger, but increased her inclinations. Mr. Edwin was certainly an object to inspire the soft passion, which was to this lady, in the degree she now felt it, as violent as new ; she persevered, though with great difficulty, in her attacks : as he was so much devoted to gaming, little time was left for intrigue, and the grosser appetites were gratified with more ease than goût : as to his serious desires, when his inordinate love of play would suffer them to arise in his mind, they were ever pointed to Anna Mansel.

But Mrs. Corbet was not accustomed to give up a point on which her heart was set ; she sent him an anonymous challenge, which no young gay man would refuse with the slightest regard to his reputation ; they met, the lady was satisfied ; one interview succeeded the other, and Mrs. Corbet's attachment increasing with a rapidity she had no wish to repel, uniting treachery with cunning, she formed the plot of betraying

traying to Mr. Edwin the ill conduct of his wife, in order to effect a separation between them, which would, she flattered herself, secure to her the legal possession of the object on whom she doated.

The fatal masquerade was not the first or only place from whence Mrs. Edwin had retired with the Count. Mrs. Corbet well knew what would happen, and having appointed him to meet her there, set him to watch his wife the whole evening, and at her instigation he had followed them to her house; there the unhappy pair were surprized, not, as Mrs. Edwin said, sleeping, but in a situation sufficiently provoking to a husband.

Mrs. Corbet, depending on the contempt she knew Edwin felt for his wife, and unacquainted with, or not allowing for, the passionate warmth of his country, thought the law only would have been his resource; but the dreadful consequence of her deceit to a woman she called friend, and who had indeed been greatly influenced by her example, rendered her truly miserable, in the
loss.

loss of the man she loved, and that by her own contrivance, and left her in full possession of the contempt and abhorrence of the world for her part in so deep a tragedy.

Her house, from being thronged with a certain description of people, who not having been absolutely found out, pretended to some degree of reputation, became deserted ; and her fortune being too small to support it without some such assistance, she had often received from Mrs. Edwin, she flew, loaded with ignominy and shame, a burthen to herself, a disgrace to her relations, friends she had none, to the continent, where she finished her life, in indigent obscurity.

Mrs. Edwin was so obnoxious to Sir William and Lady Edwin, to whom their unhappy son related all that had happened, they detested her name, and Sir William insisted on her being removed.

Miss Edwin, however, continued her firm advocate. The feelings of that young lady seldom carried her out of her dear self. The death of her brother was very
soon

soon reconciled to her ideas ; her prospects were considerably enlarged by it, and the addition to her fortune of infinitely more consequence than the loss of fifty brothers.

Charles Herbert was now the undoubted heir to her father's estate, which was entailed by his grandfather on him, in failure of male issue from Sir William ; her mother's, with all the personals, would be her's. A desire of mixing in the gay scenes she had reluctantly been torn from, returned with the power of enjoying them, when she confessed her affection for Herbert ; it was done with a view of conciliating the favour of her offended parents, whose disgust at the levity and imprudence of her conduct, threatened to fix her in a sphere of life she detested. As to the young man, she had once thought him amiable, but that was before her taste was polished by a thorough knowledge of the great world ; before she had learned to laugh at all sacred engagements. Colonel Mendez had taught her many lessons, besides despising the language of truth ; and fond as she once was

of him, no person living could be less to her taste now than Charles Herbert.

But she knew her mother's folly in setting a value on every thing that corresponded with her old-fashioned notions that Sir William would not oppose his lady in any thing ; and that a match with her cousin was always their hobby-horse ; besides, owning a passion for him went a great way towards clearing her from some unpleasant reflections which had been spread concerning her connection with Mendez ; then again she dearly loved mischief, and if not first in Herbert's affections, she should have the satisfaction of rendering his union impossible with her, who was ; since, if he declined the proposal, as she more than expected, he must either stay abroad under the disgrace of his friends, or return to what she knew he would never submit to, a servile dependence on people who conceived themselves ill used by him.

But in those conjectures she was deceived ; for Herbert had left England in such thorough conviction of Anna's imprudence,

dence, which, though it had indeed been rendered somewhat doubtful in Collet's first letter, was brought to a proof in his second, that he had given up all thoughts of her, but those of regret and compassion.

His father's deplorable end, his increasing obligations to the Edwins, their noble behaviour to his mother and sister, with their parental care of himself, would have drawn from him, at their requisition, his life without a murmur: when, indeed, Mrs. Herbert first hinted her wish he should marry his cousin, so much he disliked the manners and conduct he had been witness to in that young lady, it appeared to him the much greater sacrifice, and his answer to Mrs. Herbert conveyed a positive rejection of the treaty.

But when his mother, on whom he doted, came to plead to him the kindness of Sir William and Lady Edwin, the destitute and defenceless state she and his sister must be in if deserted by them, the charge of ingratitude it would entail on them all to reject not only the offer but the earnest
desire

desire of both the lady and her friends, when she conjured him not to complete the wretchedness of his mother, and assured him all her hope of comfort in this life depended on his obliging her, when she begged him to recal to his idea the many, many years of her past life, in which misery had darkened her days and rest forsook her nights, and implored him not to let her now experience that from the darling of her soul, which would far exceed all she had yet suffered; and when he considered that the only woman he had yet seen, or indeed hoped to see, with whom his heart claimed alliance, was lost to him, and that for ever, greatly as he disliked Cecilia, he could not prevail on himself to withhold the consolation his dear mother demanded, and therefore impowered her to forward the affair, and say any thing she pleased for him, promising to meet her in London as soon as she wished; he likewise wrote to Sir William and Lady Edwin, and to their daughter, in terms consistent with that engagement.

Cecilia had no ideas of the matters being so hastily concluded ; her design being to avert the sentence of living in Wales ; to tease Herbert, and to amuse herself ; however, as she knew no remedy, and concluded she should be better able to manage him than her parents, thought it best to submit with a grace to what she then saw no hopes of avoiding.

Herbert, by setting out for England, mis-
sed Collet's last letter, giving an account of Anna's unexpected good fortune ; and as Lady Edwin had not, in her first perturbation, informed Mrs. Herbert of any of the particulars, only simply, that an heir was found to her brother's estate, it was impossible he could know that heir was Miss Mansel ; what then were his feelings when, at the same moment, he learned her rank and fortune ? He was likewise convinced, she had been injured in every report circulated to her disadvantage.

Too late was justice done her character ; his honour was engaged ; he had signed the contract, the deeds were engrossing ; and if
that

that had not been the case, could he now dare to aspire to a person of her rank, courted and caressed by all the world, followed and admired as much for the beauty and accomplishments every mouth was full of, as for the estate she was heiress to?

It could not be.

What then did prudence, reason, and honour dictate? To avoid her sight, to fly from the temptations of gazing on her, and to decline all intercourses, or even knowledge of her affairs; this was the lesson hard necessity taught, and which he was resolving to put in practice, when the calamity in Sir William's family rendered an interview unavoidable.

Anna Mansel, young, innocent, and amiable at Llandore, captivated his heart before he was sensible of its danger, at the instant he believed her engaged; his eyes dwelt insensibly on the attractive elegance of her person, his soul hung on the accents of her lips, and his senses were enraptured with the fascinating charms of her conversation; to love her was a part of his nature

he could not conquer ; unconscious of any design of injury to her, as unapprehensive of danger to himself, he sought not to explore the secret springs of feelings, that were no less new than delightful ; it was enough, that to-morrow, and to-morrow, he should see her ; she would listen with pleasure while he read a selected passage from a favourite author ; she would again sing the song that had yesterday charmed him ; if they walked out, he should decorate her bosom, the seat of purity and truth, with a flower of his culling ; if they conversed, he was sure to find his own sentiments endeared to his reason by a recollection that they were her's ; but no farther thought ruffled the serenity of the present, or alarmed him with apprehensions for the future, till Anna began to absent herself from Llandore, and the day was fixed for her departure.

Then the pangs he felt revealed a secret pregnant with despair and disappointment ; her circumstances so narrow, his own so dependent, his parents forming such hopes from his advancement in life, how could he
dispense

dispense with the duty he owed them, or answer to his own honour, any attempt to seduce the affections of an amiable young creature, from the person to whom he understood she was engaged?

We have seen the progress of his affection after the interview in London, which could not now increase, and which had not suffered abatement.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

Old Habits are soon resumed.

MRS. Edwin's guardian refusing to receive her, she was, for the present, removed to lodgings; and Mr. Edwin sent down in great state to the family vault for interment, attended by Herbert, who carried with him Sir William's recommendations to be returned for the borough in the room of his deceased father.

Lady Edwin, whose soul, though it fell

not under woes which are the common lot of mankind, lamented more the degeneracy of her son than his death ; constitutionally attached to the dignity of her family, she considered his early fate, though it wrung all the mother in her soul, as a period to the immorality and extravagance of his actions ; such a life reflected disgrace on the blood of the Trevannions ; had it been continued, the estate as well as name, as far as it depended on him, the one must have been branded with dishonour, the other divided among sharpers.

Anna was now literally the pride and hope of her aunt ; in her she delighted, and with her she chiefly spent her time ; for as to her daughter, she had a settled ill opinion of her principles ; to deviate from the truth was, in Lady Edwin's estimation, a prognostic of the worst kind ; and Miss Edwin minded not confirming such deviations, with the most solemn asseverations to carry her point.

Wearied by a vain opposition to her obstinacy, and soon hoping to see her married
to

to Herbert, she was again permitted to receive and pay her own visits, though under restrictions, which she regarded not; but indecent as it must appear, Mrs. Edwin was no sooner recovered, and in her own house, than whenever Cecilia could escape the observation of her mother, they were inseparable.

The young widow, it is true, had the modesty to keep at home; but though she had loved the Count, her mind had no resources within herself; to be alone was, to her, the most frightful solitude; and shut out by her imprudence from the most valuable part of society, it required little pains to induce her to accept the company least calculated to retrieve her lost reputation, rather than be alone.

Her large estate, and the great personal fortune settled on the heirs of a woman who was yet childless, rendered her a most interesting object to an officer in the guards; Captain Mellish, with the assistance of a handsome figure, and a competent degree of assurance, contrived to introduce himself

in a most favourable light to Mrs. Edwin ; it was not seldom he there met Cecilia, and the story of the Count and Mendez being too recent to be forgotten, it furnished him with a hint of providing for a brother officer, who he accordingly introduced, and who as naturally fell desperately in love with Miss Edwin, as he had himself done with the young widow.

Of this connection the family in Grosvenor-square were ignorant ; but Mrs. Wellers and Lady Ann heard it from every quarter ; it was circulated in the morning visits, sneered at after dinner, circumstantially repeated at tea, and between the deals spoken of at the card-table of every genteel family in the vicinity of St. James's, excepting only at Sir William Edwin's, and (while they were present,) where they visited.

Mr. Herbert, being daily expected in town to take his seat, and the Edwin family detained only by Anna's affairs, which were nearly settled, it was judged most prudent to avoid adding to their afflictions, by
hinting

hinting at an affair that engrossed so much the chat of the town.

Amidst the splendour of riches, and in the highest enjoyment of all they could purchase, Anna found in her internal wretchedness, the fallacy and inefficacy of mere affluence, when the heart is not at ease.

It was in vain the good Mr. Bently continued his efforts to divert her attention from her own sorrows, by administering relief to the less corrosive ones of others; she was the chearful giver, and the blessing of the faint-hearted followed her steps; but all would not do: the anguish of her mind not only preyed on her spirits, but visibly injured her health; and though she kept them as much as possible from her friends, had many complaints that indicated an early period to a life, not more valuable to her own circle, than to society in general.

Mr. Mordant was distracted at the alteration in her looks; and Collet, who was no less a favourite with Bently for the honesty of his principles than for his medicinal skill,

had a plain neat chariot given him, with a pair of strong black horses, on purpose to visit her daily.

Such a rapid rise in the fortune of an apothecary, who did not possess faculties that would at all get him on in his own village, could not fail of exciting curiosity; and perhaps my reader will suspect from the specimen I have already given, some little scandal found its way into the surmises of the judicious inhabitants of Layton.

But no such thing happened. Had Mr. Collet been obliged, from unforeseen losses, the decrease of his patients, the illiberal reflections of his neighbours, or any other cause, to have laid down a chariot, instead of setting it up, it would have been a most fortunate circumstance, in that it would have furnished the ladies and gentlemen of the place with an occasion of repeating every little folly of his life; it would have given them a pretence to sit in judgment on all the errors he either had, or was said to have committed; and, finally, it would have offered a fine opportunity for them to display

display the compassion of their natures by pitying the poor fellow, and their penetration in having always thought what it would come to.

In the present case his chariot
Increased his practice;
Improved his skill;
Gave the *je ne sçai quoi* to his person;
Brought him invitations to dinner;
Introduced him to Mrs. Bibbins's tea-table;

And induced a lady that kept a boarding school in the town, with whom he had long been enamoured, to make such advances to the diffident apothecary, as opened his mouth, and gave Lady Ann an opportunity of conferring on them the honour of her presence at their nuptials, which were celebrated at her house, with special license, by Mr. Mansel, when Miss Herbert did Mrs. Collet the honour of standing bride-maid. That afternoon, Lady Ann received a letter from Wilkinson, inclosed in one to Mr. Mansel, both which he presented to her; she immediately apologized to her

company for the respect, she said, she must shew an old friend, and then read as follows :

To the Reverend DAVID MANSEL.

“ Dear Sir,

“ THE absence of our worthy pastor
“ from his flock, though very decently
“ supplied in point of parochial duty, cannot be more sensibly felt by any one
“ among them than myself; when will our
“ good rector return? is a question constantly asked of me; it is a question. I
“ heartily wish I could answer.

“ You have been so good as to assign
“ very kind and considerate reasons for
“ not letting me know the success of your
“ inquiries after Lady Ann Trevannion; I
“ have brought my mind to rejoice in the
“ discovery; I exult in the certainty of
“ seeing the loveliest and most amiable of
“ women in a rank, where her example
“ and merit will be equally and conspicu-
“ ously beneficial to an admiring world;
“ you

“ you say, when I can, from my heart,
“ offer my congratulations on this event,
“ you will lay them at the feet of your
“ charming patroness; that time is now
“ arrived: with respect to her my chief
“ happiness is, that I had the penetration
“ to distinguish, to love, not indeed be-
“ fore she was the object of adoration to
“ all who knew her, but before one view
“ could be attributed to me, except the
“ purest affection.

“ The letter I have the honour to in-
“ close to her, may expose me to censure
“ as a vain man, but I flatter myself strong
“ proofs would be necessary to prove me
“ a dishonest one; if my request is ho-
“ noured with Lady Ann’s approbation,
“ she will communicate it to you, Sir, and
“ I will hope for your good office on the
“ subject it contains; if not, she will have
“ the goodness to conceal the error of,
“ dear Sir,

Y^r “ Your gratefully obliged,

“ humble servant,

“ EDWARD WILKINSON.”

To

TO Lady ANN TREVANNION.

(Inclosed in the foregoing.)

“ Madam,

“ IF the crooked lines of this letter
“ speak any other language than that of
“ the most friendly congratulations on
“ your restoration to that family, and those
“ honours you was born to adorn, they do
“ injustice to my feelings, since, ardent as
“ were my wishes, they were ever damped
“ by a presentiment of your superiority
“ and my own unworthiness; and the dis-
“ covery, that I was not mistaken, though
“ it was impossible for me to know how,
“ was what I rather expected than feared;
“ accept then, madam, from a heart, that,
“ towards you, has never known guile,
“ the sincerest congratulations; and happy
“ as you are in the possession of every
“ earthly blessing, forgive the farther bold-
“ ness of one, who would, die to serve, or
“ give you pleasure.

“ I am,

“ I am, madam, by the favour of my
“ late friend, Mr. Herbert, already in
“ possession of considerable property, the
“ produce of my share in the iron-works
“ my own industry has brought to be so
“ beneficial to the company. My lot is
“ fixed here, far from the society my in-
“ clinations would lead me to; and here
“ I must continue, at least, for some years,
“ before the blessings of independence will
“ empower me to fix on any other resi-
“ dence. I am formed for society; my
“ heart wants a partner; do you know,
“ in the number of your friends, madam,
“ one who would receive it, torn and
“ mangled as it is, with its first attach-
“ ment? Mr. Herbert’s last words to me
“ were,

“ Remember my kindness to you.”

“ The injunction was needless. I can ne-
“ ver forget. If vanity and my own wishes
“ mislead me, Lady Ann Trevannion will
“ pity, without exposing, the folly of her
“ friend.

“ I have thought, in the mild refulgent
“ lustre

“ lustre of Miss Herbert’s eyes, I have
“ seen she inherited her father’s sentiments ;
“ if I am honoured with your approbation,
“ I shall certainly try, whether I am mis-
“ taken or not ; but it is in your power to
“ silence me for ever, as my obedience to
“ your commands, my veneration for your
“ judgment, and my respect for you, and
“ your’s, can end only with the life of,

“ Madam,

“ Your most obedient,

“ and devoted,

“ humble servant,

“ E. WILKINSON.”

Miss Herbert, whose curiosity was very strongly excited by the manner in which Mr. Mansel delivered Wilkinson’s letter, as well as the eagerness with which it was perused, turned so sick before it was finished, she was obliged to quit the room ; our heroine immediately followed her, and questioned her with great tenderness, on the cause of her sudden indisposition ; her evasions, accompanied with glowing cheeks.

and

and conscious glances from her eyes, at the letter, convinced Anna she had the cause in her hand ; however, she forebore pressing her farther, and was going, when Miss Herbert gently detaining her hand, said, “ dear Lady Ann, answer me one question ;” “ a thousand, my dear Patty ;” “ what would you know ?” She again coloured deeply, and in a low voice hardly amounting to a whisper, asked, “ If Wilkinson’s generous disinterested passion “ were at last to be rewarded ?”

“ I believe it is, my dear,” answered Anna, “ but not by me ; there is his letter, “ I leave it for your perusal ; and when you “ have done so, if your sickness should be “ quite gone off, you will be so good as to “ return to the company.”

The reader is by this time in possession of a secret long kept, and carefully guarded in the bosom of Miss Herbert ; from her infancy up, she beheld Wilkinson with a partial regard ; when he addressed Anna at Llandore, she felt every uneasiness a person of her placid turn could be subject to,

to, in such a situation ; but as he had never made the most distant advances to her, she kept from every creature living the preference with which she honoured him ; and her's would, as most other hopeless passions are apt to do, have died away, without any material injury to her health or spirits ; but when, at the death of her father, Mrs. Herbert found in him the tender and respectful solicitude of a son, as well as the unremitting attention, to her affairs, of a sincere friend ; when the affection of a brother was added to the respect he had ever shewn her, the gentle heart of Patty was irrecoverably lost, and gratitude gave too great a sanction to her regard for him, for prudence to keep either within bounds ; she gave a loose to sentiments so laudably founded ; and Anna being now out of the reach of his addresses, indulged the most flattering hopes, that she should be the next object of his choice.

The letter from him, delivered with such form by Mr. Mansel, shocked and alarmed her ; was Patty Herbert a queen, Wilkin-
son

son should share her crown; and why might not worth, like his, be equally acceptable to Lady Ann? thence her agitation and sickness; but left alone to read a letter, every line of which, in her opinion, might have been penned by a Cicero, her transports were lively and sincere.

“ Ah !” exclaimed she, “ my eyes were
“ never before in my favour ! how often
“ have I lamented their truant variation
“ from the colour of the rest of my family,
“ and envied Charles his fine dark ones ?
“ but now I would not change them, no
“ not for Lady Ann’s.” With a light heart and pleased look, she re-entered the drawing-room, and restored, tho’ rather reluctantly, the letter she so highly prized.

“ Well, my dear,” said Lady Ann, archly, “ is your question answered ?”—“ Lord, “ what nonsense !” was the blushing answer.

Mansel guessed the subject, and gaily offered any wager, he should have the pleasure of performing the sacred ceremony again within a month.

“ A month !”

“ A month !” repeated Patty ; “ no, indeed, Mr. Mansel.”

The laughter of the company reminded her the little occasion there was for her answering the good man, as it explained to them what they would not else have so soon suspected, that she was one of the parties alluded to. After a day spent in harmony and good humour, they parted early on account of the bride and bridegroom’s return to Layton.

CHAP. LXXXIV.

More Family Pride.

ANNA felt the highest pleasure in the prospect of seeing her friend happy ; she undertook to set her down in Grosvenor-square, in order to sound Mrs. Herbert and Lady Edwin ; by the first, the offer was received with unaffected pleasure. Wilkinson was the man in the world she would

would chuse for Patty ; the latter said,
“ no objection could be made to the man,
“ but his origin must, from his trade, have
“ been very mean, and his family such, as
“ it would be impossible for them to mix
“ with.”

“ Oh,” answered Patty eagerly, “ he has
told mamma and me a thousand times, he
had not a relation in the world.”

“ Really,” said Anna, surprized, “ I
“ little thought, at Llandore, there was so
“ great a similarity in our circumstances ;
“ why may we not suppose,” continued she
to Lady Edwin, “ the meanness of this
“ worthy young man’s bringing up, is ow-
“ ing to some particular misfortune in his
“ family ; he certainly possesses sentiments
“ and principles that would do honour to
“ the most elevated station ; and as to his
“ trade, how near was I being apprenticed
“ to a mantua-maker ?”—“ Well,” re-
turned Lady Edwin, “ let him come up ;
“ and if Patty—but I see no objection that
“ she will have, we will inquire into his
“ connections.”

At

At this instant Herbert entered the room—Anna rose immediately; it was late; she had an appointment.

“Nay, my dear,” said Lady Edwin, “we have another wedding to settle; you shall not go, you are now the principal of the Trevannion family, it is proper you should be consulted.”

“Who I, madam?” answered Anna, trembling violently; “indeed I can’t—I beg—you must pardon me, I can have no kind of right;—I—indeed.”—

“Anna,” said her aunt, interrupting her, “you mistake this matter; but if not so, pray oblige me.” She was re-seated, hardly able to conceal her emotions; not daring to trust her eyes towards Herbert, she returned his bow to her with a slight inclination of her head, which had more the appearance of the stiff pride of Lady Edwin to a peer of yesterday, than the gentle elegance of Anna Trevannion.

“Well, Charles,” said Lady Edwin, “we have heard of your success—have you seen my daughter?”

“I am

“ I am just come from her dressing-room.”

“ You went to her first then ; that was quite right ; but is he ever wrong, sister ?”

Mrs. Herbert’s eyes glistened ; her son bowed. “ I hope,” continued Lady Edwin, “ she is pleased at the honour conferred on you by your countrymen.”

“ I hope so,” was the answer.

“ Sir William is a constant attendant at the house. I should imagine, Charles, you may do your duty by your constituents, without being so very punctual.” —It would be his greatest pride and pleasure to merit the approbation of his friends.

“ Oh, had my dear unhappy Hugh but possessed half your discretion, how should I at this moment exult, instead of mourning as I incessantly must, not only the loss of my son, but of his honour ; but let us avoid so unpleasing a retrospect ; I have yet left the consoling hope of seeing my daughter happy, of uniting her to a young man, whose own honour and goodness will be the best security
“ for

“ for her’s ; and now we are alone, I will
“ tell you how Sir William and I propose
“ you shall be established ; he has given di-
“ rections to put your father’s family seat
“ in complete order and repair, which, to-
“ gether with the redeemed estate, will be
“ immediately your’s ; that, and ten thou-
“ sand pounds ready money, will, we think,
“ be a proper setting out for such a young
“ pair ; and as Cecilia *now* (sighing) will,
“ first and last be a great fortune, we shall
“ make what additions to your income an
“ increase of family may render it necessary
“ to support your rank in the world ; at
“ Sir William’s death, his estate comes to
“ you, as matter of right ; as mine, which
“ I inherit by my grandmother’s will, be-
“ sides all our personals, does to her.

“ You have often wondered, sister,” to
Mrs. Herbert, “ at my chusing to reside
“ at Dennis-Place ; you see now, in the
“ claims of my niece, a good reason for it ;
“ it was the family residence of my ances-
“ tors on my mother’s side, and from my
“ father’s death I have always looked with
“ expectation.

“ expectation to what has happened ; but
“ happy as I am to resign to Lady Ann
“ her father’s estate, it might not have been
“ so pleasing to give up my mansion—
“ forgive me, niece, I know what you
“ would say with that generous earnestness
“ in your countenance, but Lady Edwin
“ could not accept that from courtesy, to
“ which she had a legal right.—I have
“ taken care Trevannion House, the re-
“ vered spot which has given birth to so
“ many heroes, should not wear the ap-
“ pearance of being deserted ; but my
“ home has always been at my own palace ;
“ your mother, Charles, likes Llandore,
“ and Patty seems inclined to settle there
“ —have you any objections to what I
“ have said ?”

While Lady Edwin, with a solemnity inspired with the recent calamity in her family, was thus laying down a plan no less generously than prudently concerted, betwixt Sir William and herself, the sensations of her auditors were, though all earnestly attentive, very different. Mrs. Her-

bert's were those of grateful joy and maternal exultation, at the splendid change a few months had brought about in her son's prospects ; tears of thankful piety ran down her cheek, and her whole soul bent in humble acknowledgements to God : she was ready to cry out with the psalmist, *it is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

Patty's heart expanded with fraternal affection, and it bounded in the happy state of her own hopes ; but Herbert sat the image of despair. " You are too good, " madam," said he, with a bursting heart and swimming eyes. Often had those eyes been seen melting with sensibility, overflowing with compassion ; and often had that heart throbbed at woes in which pity only gave him a share ; *now*, for his own fate, he could have dropped tears of blood. There sat in his view all he adored on earth, and he was listening to the particular terms of an engagement, from which he could not recede, and which must, by a voluntary act of his own, deprive him of her for ever. Anna's feelings, whatever they

they were, were soon, in some measure, diverted by Lady Edwin's thus addressing her :

“ And now, my dear niece,” said she,
 “ I have no concern in this world but for
 “ you ; how is it, that so many offers of
 “ the first rank have been so peremptorily
 “ declined ? Sir William is perpetually
 “ courted for his interest with our charm-
 “ ing niece to make her election ; I have
 “ never spoken to you on the subject be-
 “ fore, nor should I now touch on it, but
 “ my hopes, so exceedingly disappointed
 “ where they were most sanguine, in sup-
 “ port of the honour of my ancient family,
 “ bid me look to you for their revival ; a
 “ revival actually necessary to my exist-
 “ ence. Sir Howel Gwyn, of a house as
 “ respectable as our own, with his original
 “ inheritance unalienated in any part, pas-
 “ sionately admires Lady Ann Trevannion.”

“ Ah, madam, forbear,” interrupted Anna, in a faint voice, her spirits sunk into a state of nervous debility, “ urge not a
 “ change in my condition ; I *never*, no ne-

“ *ver*, will consent to;” and, perceiving the surprize of Lady Edwin to be visibly attended with displeasure at such a positive declaration of sentiments so repugnant to her wishes, added, “ Did I not promise my
“ cousin to be your comforter ? Are you
“ not now disposing of your daughter ?
“ Suffer me, my dear aunt, to be your
“ Anna Trevannion ? Why should I be in
“ such haste to part with a name so lately
“ assumed, and so highly valued ?”

The conclusion of this speech mollified the unpleasant beginning ; it was addressed to the vulnerable part of Lady Edwin, and could not fail of being acceptable ; it had indeed often occurred to her, that a match for her niece might offer, not beneath her acceptance, either in blood or fortune, who, for the possession of such a desirable woman, with so large an estate, might consent to take the name of Trevannion, and the value set on it by Anna was so flattering to her wishes, that it brought tears of pleasure into her eyes.

She was not the only person present so
affected ;

affected; Herbert (though certain she could never be his) heard, with trembling anxiety, Lady Edwin's speech of marriage to Anna; the *never, no never*, from the lips of her he adored with such decided earnestness revived his soul, and excess of pleasure took the place which the pangs of despair had a moment before dreadfully filled.

Anna was suffered to retire before supper, though with great reluctance on the part of her friends, who pressed her stay. Comfortless and wretched, she threw herself into her carriage, to which she was attended by Herbert, the aid of whose trembling hand, in silence offered, was in silence rejected.

At her return home, anxious to carry her ideas out of herself, and notwithstanding her own lost happiness, solicitous for that of her friends, she wrote the following letter to Wilkinson :

“ HOW many obligations have I to
“ acknowledge to my friend Mr. Wilkin-
G 3. “ son ?

“ son? how many apologies are due to
“ him, for my suffering any engagement
“ to prevent my telling him, how sensible
“ I am of his unwearied solicitude in my
“ behalf, when almost friendless his kind-
“ nefs would have protected me from the
“ distress I was fated to experience?

“ The affection you professed for me, I
“ shall always esteem an honour, and re-
“ flect on with pleasure; no gratification
“ can equal that of being distinguished by
“ a virtuous mind.

“ I have examined the circle of my
“ friends; the eye you allude to, speaks
“ the language of truth and innocence,
“ and you, I believe, understand it. I
“ have prepared Lady Edwin to esteem
“ my friend Mr. Wilkinson; Mrs. Her-
“ bert is only more partial to her own son.
“ I cannot dispense with receiving your
“ congratulations at such a distance, you
“ must come, and let us hear, if you can
“ talk as well as you write.

“ A. TREVANNION.”

C H A P. LXXXV.

A Man of no Family.

WITHIN a week from the date of Lady Ann's letter, Wilkinson arrived in town. He waited on her, and paid his unembarrassed compliments on her situation; she with pleasure observed it, and expressed her high satisfaction at seeing him. Her visits were less and less frequent in Grosvenor-square, and she excused herself whenever she could from going there; but on this occasion she was resolved to impose on herself a sensible mortification, to be of service to her friends; she therefore took him there in her vis-a-vis. Sir William, who always paid the highest deference to her judgment, on her very favourable introduction of Wilkinson, gave his ready consent to his addresses, though Lady Edwin still adhered to her first opinion, that they ought to know more of his origin, before he was honoured with their general approbation.

The young man, rather abashed at this objection, not put in the most delicate terms, after a little hesitation, told her his birth was meaner than perhaps she had any idea of ; for though he knew he had lost his mother in child-birth, the woman of the house, a very poor one, where she lodged, could never tell, whether she had dropped out of the clouds, or sprung out of the earth ; but, however, he believed he must submit to the odium of passing for the illegitimate offspring of that mother. He added, nobody ever appeared to claim kindred with her ; which he presumed would not have been the case, had she not been very poor ; he was, he said, with a smothered agitation and a mixture of pride and indifference, sent to a workhouse, and from thence put apprentice to a whitesmith.

Anna's looks bore testimony to her feelings during this narration, and Patty was obliged to quit the room ; Lady Edwin applauded his ingenuity, and asked, if the person were alive where his mother died ?

“ She was, madam,” answered he, carelessly,

lessly, "a month ago ; I paid her her annuity then."

"You allow her one?" said she, much pleased.

"A trifle, madam ; that is her address ; I will not, I assure you, attempt to make any advantage of your indulgence ; Miss Herbert left the room uneasy, may I have the honour of asking after her health?" —He was shewn to her apartment.

Wilkinson's pride was very much hurt at Lady Edwin's objections, tho' he could not condemn the motive for making them ; he had very high notions of honour, and kept to his word in his interview with Patty, contenting himself with common inquiries ; just as he returned to Lady Edwin's dressing-room, Mr. Herbert and Cecilia entered ; they had walked out, the morning being fine, to see their new carriage, with which Cecilia was, or said she was, so pleased, that she very officiously entered into a description of it to Anna, who, ill disposed for the subject, coolly left her, as

soon as one moment's cessation of her volubility gave her an opportunity.

Sick at heart, mortified, and dispirited, she sent for Mr. Mansel and Mrs. Wellers into her library, and thus addressed them :

“ I am going, my dear friends, to open
“ to you the anxious feelings of that heart
“ which would not have known conceal-
“ ment, had it been in its power to com-
“ municate joy of any kind ; but its sor-
“ rows, and those only, would I have kept
“ concealed from your knowledge.

“ Your penetration, the interest you took
“ in my happiness, however, discovered
“ me ; you have long known the source of
“ that misery which must in the end, by its
“ effects on my health, undermine every
“ other comfort in which I abound ; yet
“ I wish to be directed, to be advised ; my
“ resolution abandons me when I have most
“ need of it, to be witness to those nup-
“ tials will destroy me ; oh, where,” sink-
ing on Mrs. Wellers' bosom, “ can I fly
“ from them, from myself ?”

This address, accompanied with looks of
anguish

anguish and despair from her, whose delight it was to chase affliction from every other heart, affected her friends exceedingly; "and why," said Mrs. Wellers, "must it take place at all? why should two such minds, paired by the Almighty, be separated? Why must our dear Anna's peace be sacrificed to mere form? And why must so amiable a young man be lost to every enjoyment of life? he is not less miserable, nor less to be pitied, than you; he adores you, my beloved friend."

"Ah, no, no," answered Anna, shaking her head, the tears dropping off her cheeks on the friendly bosom of Mrs. Wellers.

This was too much for the retentive powers of that good woman; her promise of secrecy was no longer remembered; she persisted in her assertion, and recounted in proof of it, his following her to Dalton's, his correspondence with Collet, his avowed love for her, which had been his first concern at the moment his misfortune obliged him to quit the kingdom, and which was only restrained by the unhappy concur-

rence of circumstances that fixed, as a matter beyond doubt, her connection with Edwin.

This was news, indeed, to Anna ; it flattered her pride ; it gratified her love ; she no longer could reproach herself with being so fondly attached to a man who returned it with indifference ; if her passion was hopeless, it was not unrequited : however, so many cruel reasons combining, might enforce his consent to an engagement, so necessary to the peace of the family, and consistent with the gratitude and honour of his principles ; it was some consolation to know she was beloved by the object of her fond wishes, and that, however painful her sensations, his were no less so.

Mrs. Wellers, eager to take some step to save her young friend from despair, proposed Mansel's acquainting Herbert of the ill conduct of his wife elect, or she would do it herself ; but this was opposed by Anna with great resolution and firmness ; it was a measure, she said, beneath her, and unworthy of them ; it was derogatory to
the

the honour of her sex, and would lead to a conduct in Herbert which she should be the first to condemn, and the last to forgive; she owned that the pleasure it gave her to believe herself dear to him, was greatly lessened by the little share of happiness that appeared to await his marriage with Miss Edwin; but that she was of opinion, Mr. Herbert was as much engaged to Cecilia by the law of honour, which she trusted never would be infringed by her, or by her means, as if the nuptial benediction had already passed; that, therefore, she entreated they would give her their words not to interfere in a matter of such delicacy and consequence.

Both Mr. Mansel and Mrs. Wellers' judgment coincided with her's; but it was not judgment, it was sensibility and sympathy that suggested the breaking Herbert's engagement; when cool reason resumed her place, the thing was impracticable.

The Bath scheme was again revived with such warmth on the part of our heroine, that before they separated, the day was fixed for their departure.

CHAP.

C H A P. LXXXVI.

A Ramble in Kensington Gardens.

THE next morning Wilkinson got his old pensioner to wait on Lady Edwin ; she was upwards of eighty, and very infirm, but her memory was unimpaired ; she said, “ the mother of Wilkinson came to her
“ house after dusk, and took the only room
“ she could let ; that she was very ill the
“ three months she was there ; she suspected
“ she was poor, because she used to sell her
“ things ; and when she could not get any
“ one to buy them, she (the old woman)
“ used to carry them to pawn ; that she
“ was a very handsome young body, but
“ had such an odd way with her, thof she
“ could not say ’twas pride neither ; but,
“ however, her good man often and often
“ tretened to ax her all how and about
“ herfelf ; but some how, or some how,
“ they were both afeard ; and at last, poor
“ body, she died ; poor foul ! she was wore
“ to a skillet, and her poor ould man and
“ her

“ her was like to come into a deal of
“ trouble about it, for the parish had
“ been mortal angry ; but, however, thank
“ God, Neddy lived to pay them all their
“ charges, and God be thanked, to take
“ her ould man, who was now blind, and
“ her, off their hands.”

“ Well,” said Lady Edwin, (pleased at the principles of pride as well as justice that had dictated to him the propriety of reimbursing the parish the expences they had been at for him, as well as supporting the old couple) “ but is there nothing now
“ in your possession belonging to the poor
“ young woman ?”

“ Why, yes, answered she, here’s a bit of
“ glass, with a few pebbles round it, I cut
“ off her poor neck when I laid her out ; I
“ nowed it was worth little, because I sould
“ a stay-hook for a sarvant body twice as
“ bigg, and the silversmith gave me but two
“ shillings for it, whereof it cost a pound ;
“ howsever, there’s some sort of letters on
“ it, and so I thot I’d keep it, and here
“ (searching an old huswife where it was
“ wrapped

“ wrapped in twenty bits of paper) it is.” Joy flashed from Wilkinson’s eyes ; this trinket, he cried, did not belong to a beggar. Lady Edwin examined it. Oh, let me see it, said Patty, her eyes streaming ; there are letters on it, which I fancy, my dear, you are too much affected to make out ; give it me, said Mrs. Herbert—It was a small gold locket, with a crystal back set round with brilliant sparks, and engraved in blue enamel P. G.

“ Pray,” said Lady Edwin, “ how came the young man to be named Wilkinson ?”

“ That’s my name, madam, and please your honour ; I nowed no other he had a better right to.”

“ Were they kind to you, Sir ?” asked Mrs. Herbert, her eyes suffused with tears.

“ Beyond my power to return,” answered Wilkinson ; “ their little house was my home, and many a plate of pye and pudding I eat there, which the good old soul used to lay bye for me, till it was often mouldy.”

The

The old woman was dismissed without the locket, but the housewife did not return empty nevertheless.

The possibility of his belonging to somebody was very pleasing to Lady Edwin, more especially as it was easy to see that Patty's affections were too firmly fixed to give much hope; had his circumstances been as uncertain as his birth, she would have been easily prevailed on to change its object, and Mrs. Herbert, as well as Sir William, approving Wilkinfon's offer, she no longer opposed the general wish; her consent once obtained, every thing else was soon settled, and it was agreed he should go down to Llandore and get the castle ready to receive his bride, from whence he was to go to Dennis Place, where the Edwin's, Mrs. Herbert, and Charles, were to meet him, and Mr. Mansel, (being apprized of the time) Lady Edwin said, would perform the double ceremony.

Of this happy conclusion he did not fail to acquaint our heroine.

His news hastened the preparations for the

the Bath excursion, Anna positively declined all invitations to the weddings, alleging her ill health as the reason.

The evening but one, previous to the time fixed for leaving London, Sir William, Lady Edwin, Mrs. and Miss Herbert and Wilkinson, supped with her, and her party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Wellers, Mr. Mordant, Bently, and Mansel, they took leave that night, Charles being engaged, and Miss Edwin at the opera.

The next morning being the last of their stay, Mrs. Wellers went home to give some directions to her people; when the weather being fine, her male friends out, and her own reflections the very worst of company, restless alone, dissatisfied abroad, Anna ordered her carriage to Kensington Gardens, a favourite excursion with her, and too early both in the year and day to be much frequented.

Here the still breeze that ushered in the finest spring morning ever seen, the dead silence, the solitude of those delightful shades, brought to her recollection the past,
the

the never to be recalled happiness she had known at dear Llandore; the innocent recreations, the rural pastimes, the morning walk, the evening ramble; "Oh," said she, "that they had never been!"

To banish thought, to avoid reflections, Anna sought retirement in Kensington Gardens.

Mistaken Anna!

It is not in the haunts of solitude, in the sequestered walk, or shady grove, the heart feels respite from grief like thine.

Love, when founded as her's was on the approbation of uncontaminated innocence, finds strong support in every beauty of the creation; the region of silence is eloquence itself, and the deepest recess of unfrequented woods, though impervious to the light of heaven, but adds to the scorching pangs of hopeless love.

Not here was Herbert to be forgotten.

She strolled on, lost in a sad but pleasing retrospect, when a deep sigh, which sounded just at her ear, though it came from the other side of a high thick-set hedge, made her

her start, and she immediately recollected how imprudent it was in her to walk alone in a place where she had not met a single creature; she turned back, but was still more alarmed at the footsteps of a man passing quick as it seemed before her in the other walk; but her fears of meeting improper company, soon gave way to surprise, when she saw, deep in thought, the object from whom her ideas never roved, throw himself on the bench she must pass; his sighs had pierced her soul, his pensive air, dejected looks, and pale countenance, were all symptoms too correspondent with her own to be disregarded; she stopped irresolute. The seat might ease the body, but it could not calm the mind of Herbert: he soon left it, and walked directly towards her. His person, it is true, approached, but his eyes bent to the earth, and his thoughts deeply engaged, he would have passed her, had she not, by an involuntary motion, and a voice modulated with grief, articulated—Charles!—Her's was at all times the voice of sensibility; it was now
most

most expressively so ; it thrilled the soul of Herbert ; his eyes were riveted on her face surcharged with tenderness ; his tongue refused its function, but with action, that spoke eloquently the language of his heart, encouraged by her soft address, in silent agony he drew near, and took her passive hand. In a moment she recollected her situation, and condemning herself for the liberty her own conduct authorized, withdrew it with a reserved air, and coldly asked him, how he came to chuse such a spot for his morning's amusement ?

Too much oppressed to answer in the same style, and too interested to let the present moment escape him ;

“ My morning amusements, madam,” said he, “ my evening diversions, and my
“ night reflections are the same ; nor business, company, nor retirement, afford me
“ one moment's respite from misery.”

The solemnity of his address, the almost convulsive motion of his limbs, the faltering of his speech, were all too strong indications of his sincerity, had she been disposed

posed to doubt it—prudence, reason, resolution, all now forsook her—She saw before her Charles Herbert, the victim of honour, the figure of despair—and what in that moment were the ideas of her own grief to his?—She trembled in her turn; the colour forsook her lips and cheeks in one moment, but returned in a deeper glow the next—she hesitated, and at last stammered out something of concern—of being sorry—of hoping things would mend, while she suffered him to lead her to the seat he had just quitted; when dropping on his knees, “Oh, Anna,” said he, “dearer to my soul than the light of heaven, than the vital air I breathe, *now* for the first and last time let the undone Herbert claim thy attention—hear me but vow at thy feet the unalterable passion that at this instant fills me with despair; that from the moment I saw thee, engrossed all of love, of adoration, it is my nature to feel: fly me not,” as she struggled to leave him; “what do you fear? Oh! thy place of safety is near the
“ heart

“ heart of Herbert—forgive me, Anna,
“ those frowns should have been assumed
“ when the voice of pity called on Charles;
“ seek not, amiable creature, to hide the
“ compassion of your heart, nor in those
“ dear moments given by fate, prevent me,
“ by your displeasure, unburthening a heart
“ that else will burst.”

“ If you wish to detain me, Mr. Her-
“ bert,” she answered, more composed,
“ you must change your posture—what
“ would the censorious world say, were *you*,
“ a *man*, almost a *married man*, to be seen
“ in this retired spot at my feet?”

“ Oh! would to God,” he returned with
vehemence, “ I had only the world’s cen-
“ sure to combat—but you wish me to rise,
“ loveliest of women—See, I obey you ;
“ but for God’s sake do not leave me ;
“ only hear me, and, circumstanced as I
“ am, I will own it right to be banished
“ your sight for ever.”

Anna was re-seated, and in the attitude
of serious attention ; looking on her with
eager tenderness, he continued :

“ Do

“ Do you, or do you not know (Lady
“ Ann Trevannion ; and dearer, far dearer
“ Anna Mansel should be above disguise)
“ I adore you ?”

“ How ! Mr. Herbert, should I know,”
answered she with some spirit, “ or ever
“ suspect such a thing ?”

“ Then if you do not already know it,
“ let me now tell you how I have loved,
“ how followed, and how doted on you !

“ Here,” continued he (opening his
waistcoat and producing the lost breast-bow)
“ *this* has been the companion of my me-
“ lancholy hours ; to *this* I fly in rapture
“ from the jewels, the pomp, the glare
“ with which my hated nuptials are to be
“ graced.”—He then, with the persuasion
of truth, and with the eloquence of true
affection, repeated every occurrence that
had fatally conspired to draw him into his
engagement with Cecilia, to which he added
a new instance of the amiable mind of his
intended bride—he had on his knees im-
plored her to reject him—had offered to
make over to her, or any future husband,
his

his right to her father's estate—had confessed his heart was engaged. The unfeeling woman answered, she was once deficient in her duty, but would now be an obedient daughter—He bewailed in a gush of sorrow his wretched fate—solemnly deplored his existence, and prayed that the life of her he adored might be one continued scene of happiness.

The die was now cast; ingenuous, open-hearted, and generous, Anna's soul was on her lips, resolutely determined to persevere in giving him up—himself resigned to his lot; no indelicacy could *now*, she thought, be imputed to her for revealing her sentiments in accents which, to the raptured ears of Herbert, were the music of the spheres. She acknowledged her attachment to him, lamented the concurrent misfortunes, which, in the moment it was in her power to render them both happy, had eternally separated them; yet she conjured him to call reason to his aid, to recollect the infinite obligations himself and family were under to Sir William Edwin. As to
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herself, she solemnly promised, for his sake, never to marry. "But, Charles," continued she, her voice lost in her emotions, "we must meet no more ;—the moment that you take a bride, I fly my country for ever."

If excess of joy and grief, struggling in one mind, could annihilate the body, Herbert must have expired.

His Anna, the woman he idolized; who he had not dared to hope thought of him with partiality, returned his passion in a strain of modest rectified tenderness, owned her love, vowing to live and lament him in a state of joyless celibacy; were it to be believed?

"Talk not of the world, or of its censure, dearest Anna," said he, throwing himself in a transport at her feet, "the universe should not prevent your grateful Herbert from thus thanking his Anna, his charming love ;—let me for this one moment call you so—for one moment press this hand to my throbbing heart, Oh, Anna! there is one way—you talk
" of

“ of leaving your country, let us go together, let us fly ; whose feelings shall we wound ? not Cecilia’s, for she—”

“ *Hold, Sir,*” interrupted Anna, rising, “ we should wound the heart of Lady Cecilia, of your mother, of every thinking being;—we should give a mortal stab to our own characters ; the cause of honour and of gratitude would suffer, whenever our names were mentioned. Go, Sir, (with indignation, and a look that petrified poor Herbert) learn to respect Virtue—let her paths be ever so thorny, they lead to peace. We separate for ever. *Once you bade me remember your parting words ; they are engraved on my heart. You then believed me engaged—your honour bade you tear yourself away—and what has Ann Trevannion done to give you such contemptible ideas of her ? Adieu, Mr. Herbert ; forget this interview, and be happy.*”

The hasty steps she was taking during this part of the conversation, soon brought her in view of her servants. Herbert fol-

lowed—"One word only—and can you—" as she quickened her pace, motioning with her hand for him to go—"yet stay," as she was leaving the garden half turning,

"Well, Sir, what would you say?"

"Are we then parting?"

"We are for ever."

"Farewel then for ever, and for ever!" and with a look of distraction he darted from her sight—scarce able to stand, her servants assisted her into the carriage.

"Now I am easy," said Anna, bursting into tears; and she returned home more eager for her Bath journey than she had left it, before her stroll in Kensington Gardens.

CHAP. LXXXVII.

An Accident.

MRS. Wellers was in St. James's-square before our heroine; she found Mr. Mor-dant and Bently with her, who, with Man-fel, were lamenting the decline of her health.

The

The visible traces of grief in her looks drew the particular attention of her uncle.

“ My dearest niece,” cried he, “ what is it that thus continually clouds your countenance ? Why is it always so sadly overcast ? I shall, when we come from Bath, be quite ready to return to Jamaica ; but if I do not see an alteration in you, how shall I prevail on myself to leave you ? ”

The starting tear that accompanied this kind inquiry, spread its infection over all present ; their looks spoke a language of sensibility to which their tongue gave not utterance ; and the general sadness of her friends was but ill calculated to raise the depressed spirits of Anna ; for although she had been so unreserved to Mrs. Wellers and Mr. Mansel, and so explicit to Herbert, there was something too shocking to female delicacy, and too humiliating to virgin pride, in any farther confession of the source of her melancholy.

Had it been within the compass of human exertion to remove with honour the obstacles to her wishes, it is most probable

her confidence in the indulgence of her uncle, and the tried friendship of Mr. Bently, might have conquered the repugnance every modest female feels to acknowledge a secret passion, but in her case the obligations of friendship, of honour, of gratitude, and blood, were leagued ; when one of them would have been quite sufficient, in such a mind as Anna's, to banish every idea of hope. As it could therefore answer no purpose but that of distressing her friends, she waved the subject ; and affecting ease, her heart was a stranger to, proposed beginning the journey to Bath that afternoon : to the happy, she observed, all places were alike.

“ Sweet girl,” sobbed Bently, “ if thou shouldst not be happy, I shall be a lunatic a second time !” Alarmed at this friendly menace, Anna flew to the good old man ; and dropping on the hand he was extending towards her, tears of grateful love, she promised much more than it was in her power to perform.

’Tis not in nature to conceive a more
beautiful

beautiful picture than the one at that instant. exhibited in the anxious friendly looks of the white-headed Bently; soothed by the gentle tenderness of the lovely Anna, the scene grew too interesting: Bently ran out of the room, as he said, to order the carriages; and their baggage being before ready, Anna left London, though in such brilliant circumstances, more internally wretched than when she had before parted from the busy spot unallied and unprovided for. Mrs. Wellers and Anna travelled in her post-chaise; Mr. Bently, Mordant, and Mansel, in the former's coach; and Polly Dalton, with Mrs. Wellers' maid, in Mr. Mordant's chaise.

They set out at six, intending to sleep at Salt Hill: Anna reposed the most unlimited confidence in Mrs. Wellers; she repeated to her, during the ride, the interview with Herbert, and found so much comfort in that good woman's sympathetic tenderness, and by her efforts to inspire her with patience and resignation to the unavoidable evils of this life, that when they got to Salt

Hill, our heroine had very little inclination to put a period to a conversation which was no less interesting than soothing to her unquiet mind ; she therefore wished, if it would not fatigue her friends, as it was moonlight, and their suit too large to fear any danger, to go on to Reading ; her will was always that of her friends, and they proceeded on their journey.

As the two ladies were too much taken up with the subject of their conversation to observe objects as they passed, the drivers not being ordered to stop, went rapidly by a coach which had lost a wheel ; but the gentlemen who followed being less engaged, stopped and found a gentleman, his wife, two young ladies, and a maid servant in great distress : as the lady was not in a condition to bear much fatigue, being far advanced in her pregnancy, and the coach too much damaged to proceed, Mr. Bently very politely offered his carriage to the lady, her daughters, and their female attendant, which was thankfully accepted ;
and

and as they were within one mile of Reading, the gentlemen followed on foot.

When our heroine alighted at the King's Arms, she wondered the coach did not immediately follow ; soon, however, it appeared very differently filled from what she expected ; she was told of the accident, and immediately waited on the lady, who received her very politely, and apologized for the trouble she had given, which had been the means of detaining the gentlemen ; she was proceeding to recount the particulars, when a scream from Anna interrupted her. "It is Mrs. Melmoth," cried she, "and this is my Eliza ; her features are not altered, and they were too dear to me to be forgotten." Embracing them both, "How fat you are grown, my dear madam ? And how is dear Mr. Melmoth ? Is this little Sophia ?"—"Yes, and Kitty too ?"

Mrs. Melmoth's cool reception of her careffes, as well as the very reserved air with which both she and her daughter received them, though it hurt Anna, may be very

easily accounted for; her growth, the alteration in her person, and the appearance of affluence that surrounded her, were circumstances that could not possibly bring to Mrs. Melmoth's mind the poor, friendless, little orphan she had discarded five years ago; yet the features were familiar to her, and she was trying at recollection, when Mr. Melmoth and Anna's friends entered.

"My dear," said Mrs. Melmoth, "this lady does Eliza and me the honour of recognizing us; but I can't for my life recollect where I have seen her." Anna smiled: the inquiries from the gentlemen of the health of Lady Anna after her journey, puzzled Mr. Melmoth; but after a moment's earnest examination of her face, "I cannot be mistaken," said he, "this must be our Anna; there is not such another set of features in the world." "Yes, my dear, my respected instructor," answered she, turning her willing cheek to his salute, "My ever dear benefactress, is is your Anna.—Behold, Sir," to her uncle, "the first real friends of my youth."

"Oh!

“ Oh ! my Eliza, a hundred fold will I
“ pay you for all the goodness of your pa-
“ rents.—I cannot, indeed,” she continued,
“ procure you a Mrs. Barlow, but I will be
“ your governess myself.—The lessons I
“ learnt from your papa, his daughter
“ shall receive from me.” While thus in
the grateful effusion of her affectionate
heart she was making professions, which
were as sincere as natural, the gentlemen
were exchanging civilities, and Mrs. Mel-
moth soon understanding how amply it was
in her power to perform her promises, and
being in a situation that wanted a friend-
bad enough, that family congratulated her,
and each other, on this happy rencontre ;
all was joy, was harmony ; even Herbert
was for the time forgotten : they sat up till
the morning was far advanced ; and when
they retired, our heroine enjoyed, what was
very unusual with her, a sound and refresh-
ing sleep, from which she did not awake
till near noon.

Mrs. Wellers felt little less pleasure than
the parties most concerned in this joyful

H 6 meeting ;

meeting; it was particularly grateful to her, from its happening at a period when the mind of her young friend stood in such need of being diverted from one object; and her pleasure at the effect it had on Anna rendered her a troublesome guest at the inn; for if she had been to rule, not a bell should have rung or a footstep been heard to disturb the sweet slumber in which she found her friend.

When they met at breakfast, the respect of the Melmoths was increased, by having heard Mr. Mordant repeat the particulars of Anna's birth and rank.

Mr. Melmoth had a mind above the impressions of interest; his love to his Pet could not be increased by her affluence, but it might by her improved accomplishments, by the display of those sentiments and principles he had, so much to his honour, taught her early years; and the self-applause naturally resulting from the reflection on a laudable action, gave him such a particular flow of spirits as diffused cheerfulness to all the company.—Mrs. Melmoth,

Melmoth, though she consented with a good grace to what she could not help, nevertheless longed to figure away again, and was ready to worship Anna, by whose means she promised herself that gratification, as well as that of looking into confusion the base calumniators who had so unprovokedly injured her character.—She attempted, though not without some confusion, to apologise for her conduct at parting with Anna, but *her* generous disposition would not suffer it—Indeed *she* had long forgotten, as far as related to any one but Lord Sutton and Frajan, every disagreeable part of that event, while their many acts of kindness and affection were constantly recollected—She longed to make those happy *who* had so largely contributed to make her so, by giving her an education which enabled her to fill her elevated station with such credit to herself and delight to her friends.

She had heard enough of their affairs to be certain they were not above pecuniary aid; but her delicacy threw so many obstacles

stacles in the way of her offering it—she at that moment conceived it a less difficult task to ask a favour than to confer one.

Embarrassed by the generosity of her own feelings, it was long before she could take courage to ask to speak with Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth alone; nor was she nearer getting over her diffidence from her being without any witness of the goodness of her heart.

Mr. Melmoth, however, led to the wished for subject, by remarking how very fortunate they had been in this meeting, as the chance of their returning to England had been determined by the wickedness of old Mr. Ashby, father-in-law to his sister, who had a mortgage on his estate; and, notwithstanding, for the last five years, they had lived with the utmost œconomy, giving up the rents towards paying the arrears due, (which he owned to be a capital sum) he had now given him notice of a foreclosure.

Anna could then speak—" Oh, Sir," said she, " I have never felt the happiness of riches so much as at this moment; " permit

“ permit me to advance you the sum that
“ will make you easy—Let the orphan,
“ who owes you more than worlds, be the
“ humble means of felicity to those whose
“ goodness has been the source of benefits
“ to her no money can repay.”

This offer was too acceptable to Mr. Melmoth not to be received with pleasure, and acknowledged with gratitude.—*He*, however, conditioned to transact the matter with her uncle (that gentleman being a better judge of the security) and *she* to have the sole establishment of Eliza.

Her eagerness to serve Mr. Melmoth would not suffer her to delay a moment acquainting her friends with his situation, and the steps she wished to take—it was enough for Mr. Bently that Anna said it—he had more money than he knew what to do with at his banker's—he would give his draft immediately.

Mr. Mordant would on no account give up the pleasure of paying the debts of his niece, and Anna decided the friendly contest, by desiring Mr. Mordant to go with
Mr.

Mr. Melmoth to the Lodge, and begging Bently to escort her to Bath, whither she invited Mrs. Melmoth and her family to accompany her, and remain there till the Lodge was in order to receive her.

This met the approbation of all parties, and the next morning they separated on their different tours; Mr. Bently's care out-travelled his fair companions—a large ready-furnished house being aired and ready to receive them.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

Another Discovery.

THEY were soon settled, and as soon known; not a person of distinction at the Bath, but left a ticket at the door of the beautiful Welch heiress—her surprise and contempt were equally excited by one among them, finely gilt and ornamented, with the hateful name of Sutton. Ill health
and

and fatigue were very good reasons for the ladies keeping house, and admitting no company for the first two or three days: Wilkinson, calling in his way to Wales, was persuaded to stay the day there; and Mrs. Melmoth entreated Anna (as they had now a beau) to walk out.

“ And pray, madam,” said the good-humoured Bently, “ what do you make of “ Mr. Mansel and me ?”—“ Oh,” answered she gaily, “ a couple of good old “ women, who stand in need of protectors “ yourselves; my Eliza shall take care of “ you both.”

Out they sallied—Almost the first object that struck their eyes was Lord Sutton—“ Good heavens !” cried Mrs. Melmoth, “ as I live and breathe there is Anna’s old “ swain—Nay, nay, don’t be so alarmed, “ child; see, he has a bigger woman by “ half than you.” Anna was indeed startled—The evils she had suffered thro’ his means had implanted in her mind an abhorrence mingled with fear, and though now safe from insult of any kind in his power.

power to offer, she could not forget how hostile to her peace he had ever been. Mrs. Melmoth and Mrs. Wellers both longed to mortify him, and joined in begging Anna to assist them; the former declaring she would part with her little finger to have the triumph of introducing Lady Ann to him—She at length consented, and they drew near an object almost beneath contempt.

The passion he had really felt for our heroine, and the disappointment of all his hopes, had increased a bilious disorder contracted in India, which, though kept under, by dint of care and attention, for many years, was now increased to a violent and dangerous degree; which, with some other chronical complaints, the effect of his free living, gave prognostics of a speedy dissolution—His skin, at all times resembling more the walnut than the lily, was now changed to a dingy saffron; the white of his hollow eyes was of the same hue, and the erect carriage of his body changed to a meagre stoop. On his arm—Oh! reader,
pity

pity even him—hung a tall, showy woman, of twenty-seven, whose bold eye wandered in search of prey from face to face of every male she met, and when they were encountered by an acquaintance, which was at every third step, the wanton tongue and leering look, significantly painted to their contempt the dying wretch who supported her, and who, from his soul, hated as much as he feared her.

His poor diseased body, covered in May with furs, his short breath, and hectic cough, formed a sad contrast to the tawdry, flaunting, and expensive trapping, the athletic stride, and strong muscular looks of his companion: to finish the group, ready to offer his obsequious arm, to smile at her wit, to echo her laugh, and to return her sly wink at his patron (at whose expence he now shone forth in a fresh suit of regimentals) followed Stevens, the humble toad-eater of the little great man.

“ Ah !” said Mrs. Melmoth, “ for heaven’s sake, dear Lady Ann, quicken your pace ; we shall lose him at last : Ah, unfortunate

“fortunate! see, he goes into that shop.” Bently comforted her, with the information of its being Bull’s Library, and that they might follow him. “Behold him,” continued the good old man, “hardly for an honest man, past the prime of his days, bending double with infirmities, a burden to himself, an antidote to the creature of his vices: no pitying friend, no kind Anna, to soothe and cheer him in the dark hour of pain, but a common prostitute, and the venal companion of his wickedness, a subaltern in his own dirty corps; who, by *pimping* and fawning, obtained a pair of colours, where it was a scandal to serve:—how ghastly an image of sin he looks!”

They were by this time at the door of the shop: Mrs. Melmoth entered first; Lord Sutton knew Mr. Melmoth was returned to England. Mr. Ashby, a man not more famous for his riches, than for the infamous mode of acquiring them, had, in the affair of Melmoth Lodge, acted as agent to the noble Lord, who impatiently waited the

the re-establishment of his health, again to revisit that delightful retreat, not as formerly, to pay visits, or to lay plots for the seduction of innocence, but to purchase it, as he said, and, as Mr. Ashby hoped, to return it to the family. Cool enough, therefore, was his salutation to Mrs. Melmoth; he hoped her husband was well, without looking off the pamphlet he was reading, or Charlotte Madan's vouchsafing to accompany her glance with a bend of the knee: the man of the shop, however, knew the Trevannion livery, and, in a great bustle, told his Lordship, Lady Ann Trevannion, the greatest beauty, and the greatest fortune in the place, was coming in. Disappointment and illness, which had reduced him to a skeleton, had not yet killed his vanity; his most pleasing looks were called forth, and he arose at her entrance.

A spectre could not have stricken him with more astonishment: his friend Dalton had not again tempted his anger, with any farther account of the fugitive Anna; and he had given her up with a reluctance that
had

had actually injured his health ; and a complication of disorders had since fully employed his time.

Deserted by those gay companions with whom he delighted to mix, when well, but who ever fly from sickness and misfortune, he had been, while in London, shut up with Villars and the low-bred Stevens ; the latter, alike ignorant of men and manners in genteel life, amused him with anecdotes out of the scandalous chronicle, laughed at his wit, and, for the thousandth time, applauded his Asiatic exploits : it was therefore unlikely, public and much talked of as her history was, it should reach him ; how then could he expect to meet in the celebrated heiress, the poor girl, whom he had robbed of her friends in so cruel a manner.

His first emotions were those of joy at meeting her ; but when he saw how surrounded with friends, who loved and respected her, abounding with the wealth, he had but lately found *not* do every thing, and inheriting, in her own natural
right

right, that rank and title so inestimable in his eyes, and for which he deemed no sacrifice an equivalent, the shame and mortification was too much even for him. He was making toward the door, when another face more, appalling to him than her's, met his eyes ; it was Wilkinfon ; who, advancing, begged to have the honour of reminding his Lordship of their last conversation ; in which he had told him, he would not let him rest till justice was done to the injured character of Anna Mansel. He told him, the providence of heaven had anticipated the amends he demanded, which was that of manifesting her innocence ; and the same power would now have the effect of exposing his guilt in this world, previous to the grand reckoning in the next.

“ Who,” said Bently, eagerly, to Mrs. Wellers, “ is this young man ? ” — “ A Welch acquaintance of Mansel's,” answered she, “ and a fine spirited fellow he is.” — Wilkinfon continued, —

“ When I behold that decayed frame,
“ convulsed, as it now is, with guilt, —
“ that

“ that countenance, where the traits of evil
“ actions so strongly counteract the indul-
“ gences wrinkled infirmity would else be-
“ speak,—those hoary locks, vainly tor-
“ tured to conceal the whiteness, which,
“ in virtuous age, would claim respect, I
“ feel a softness rising into pity, for the de-
“ faced image of God ;—but when I turn
“ my eye to that sweet flower,—when I
“ consider, it is to a succession of miracu-
“ lous events we now owe her escape from
“ your infernal arts ; that her lovely person
“ has not been contaminated ; that her
“ countenance, where the hand of nature
“ has so legibly written angel, is not rob-
“ bed of its most attractive graces, inno-
“ cence, and modesty ; that her mind,
“ wherein benevolence, purity, and every
“ female excellence reside, is not corrupted,
“ and *that* by a wretch, who is as much
“ from personal, as mental demerits, an
“ antidote to women of common decency,
“ pity is no more, indignation usurps its
“ place. The day of reckoning as to this
“ world, is at hand. *Here*, by the most
“ lucky

“ lucky accident are all the parties but one,
 “ who has for the present escaped, who
 “ durst accuse that lady.—You, Madam,”
 to Mrs. Melmoth, “ are called on, by the
 “ laws of honour and justice, to expose
 “ this disgrace of nobility.”

“ Let me pass, scoundrel,” said Lord
 Sutton, in a fury—Stevens, make way.—
 ; “ If Stevens stirs, my Lord,” answered
 Wilkinson coolly, “ he goes over those ba-
 “ lustrades.”

“ What, do you mean to murder me, vil-
 “ lain ?”—The company now interposed.
 —Mrs. Melmoth was vexed she had urged
 this interview ; and Anna, who knew not,
 in her own practice, what revenge was,
 begged Wilkinson to let him go ; she said
 she was the offended person.

“ Pardon me, Lady Ann,” answered the
 resolute young man, “ as being the repre-
 “ sentative of beauty, innocence, and vir-
 “ tue, you are offended ;—but it is those
 “ divine attributes themselves which that
 “ man has injured. His whole life has
 “ been one continued scene of outrage to
 VOL. IV. I “ one

“one or other of them;—I cannot mean
 “to hurt his crazy person, but, see you
 “not, it is his soul that shakes:—Come,
 “my Lord, be seated.” Here, drawing
 out his watch, and shewing it to him,—
 “one half hour will—I wish to hold con-
 “verse with you.”—He was proceeding,
 when, to the utter amazement of the com-
 pany, the noble Lord fainted away, the
 man of the shop fortunately catching him
 in time to prevent his fall.

The ladies were alarmed, and Charlotte
 abusive, not that she cared a pin for the
 situation of her noble keeper, but she had
 an inveterate hatred to modesty; it excited
 her ire wherever she met it, and she never
 missed an opportunity of testifying this
 amiable disposition.

From her, and from her appearance, the
 gentle soul of Anna shrunk with abhorrence;
 and Bently, taking hold of Wilkinson’s
 arm, said, “be merciful, young man; there
 “is in your countenance, what shocks that
 “monster of guilt more than all your vir-
 “tuous indignation can utter. I am my-
 “self

“ self scarce recovered from a fit of horror
“ at your voice and looks ; *be*, I am sure,
“ can bear neither. See, he revives. Suf-
“ fer him to depart whither fate and his
“ own inclination lead him : his testimony
“ in her favour is an insult to Lady Ann.
“ Let him go.”

“ You are at liberty to depart, my Lord,”
said Lady Ann ; “ I forgive you.—You
“ are indisposed. I am sorry we came in.”

Without attending to her, his eye fixed
on Wilkinfon, he told him he was ready,
he was prepared for the half hour, and re-
quested him to come near him. “ I will
“ hear,” he continued, “ all you have to
“ say, when you have gratified me in one
“ point—let me see your watch.”

“ Ah, my Lord, you shall hold it, if you
“ please.”

He took in his hand, trembling violent-
ly, and, looking on the locket which was
fastened to the chain, and on Wilkinfon,
alternately, the tears rolling down his
cheeks, at length, with sighs and groans he
could not now restrain :

“ This trinket I need not ask for,—I know, I feel it was thy mother’s; and thou wilt, in thy turn, feel horror, when thou art told thou art—” his voice sinking into a faint whisper,—“ *my son.*”

Amazement kept all dumb but Bently, whose sighs, though less audible, were bitter, and who, with his hand on his bosom, seemed waiting the event, in agitation not to be described.

Anna went to him, and, supposing him affected, as they all were, at what was passing, the unhappy malady he had been afflicted with always in her thoughts, when she saw him unusually moved,—she begged him to retire into an adjoining room with her;—he did so,—and there, supported by his charming young friend, he gave vent to the oppression of his heart; and, (in a voice scarce articulate from his agitations) told her, Wilkinson’s mother was his wife! Anna started with surprize and sympathy.

“ Oh! too sure, cried he, she was! seduced, ruined, and abandoned, by this villain!—Where, oh where,—in what
“ obscure

“ obscure corner of the earth did she finish
“ her wretched being ?—It was in *her* fate
“ I felt my Anna’s;—*her* catastrophe made
“ me tremble for thine.—His name was a
“ sufficient proof of baseness,—and your
“ avoiding him of innocence.

“ Dear, ill-fated wife of my soul !—but
“ let me not think of her.”

“ Her voice still vibrates on my ravished
ear ; still melting there, and with voluptu-
ous sweetness, thrilling through my heart.
—Oh ! to forget her.’——

Anna wept in perfect agony at this re-
newal of grief in a friend she now more
than ever revered ; she persuaded him to go
no more into the presence of a man, who
had so deeply injured him ; he, indeed, de-
terred as much by his own principles, which
held duelling but as murder palliated, as
by the pitiable state in which he was, which
took away every thought of revenge, wish-
ed not evermore to behold the wretch, who,
in return for his friendship and hospitality,
had ruined his peace, and robbed him of
every earthly happiness ; he therefore went

out at a side door, telling Anna, at parting, that as now in her sweet society, and in her promise of never driving from her presence an old man that loved her, he promised himself some few days of peace; and though Wilkinson was the son of a villain, he was also the offspring of his lost Caroline, and he might, in time, wish to be better known to him; he would chuse it should be in his own name and character.—
“ You will, therefore, Lady Ann,” added he, “ announce me to your friends by my
“ real name, which is Summers. The
“ cause for changing it will reveal itself.”

When she returned to the company, another affecting scene presented itself. Wilkinson was at that time bending his knee to Sutton, whose looks betrayed how little his conscience told him he merited respect, though, from his own son, the time was approaching, of which his feelings gave him but a melancholy preface, when art, plausibility, or even riches, would not avail.

A martyr to disease, unconnected with any of those blessed ties that, in soft sympathy

pathy and respectful love, can sooth the stern approach of death, drawing near to that omnipotent Being, whose commands had all been broken, but from whose awful sentence of retribution his soul shrank with terror, he had vainly varied the scene from place to place.

He had in a paroxysm of rage turned the unoffending Villars out of his house, to which, though in poverty, and experiencing the reverse of fate, which in her unenvied situation, is sure to be the object of triumph to the world, she refused to return; but though he could thus brutally hector over this poor woman, whose case was the more pitiable, as her heart had never shared in either the sin or show of her situation, he wanted spirit to assume the mastership of his own house at Bath, where a wretch, whose existence was a scandal to society, lived in splendour; making the man who supported her the common theme of her mirth among her abandoned associates: for this reason he put off his journey to Bath, though advised to make it, as the only re-

I 4 medy,

medy, till he was almost unable to perform the journey ; at last, under the protection of Stevens, he had ventured to approach his own house.

This consequential person was the son of a fisherman, who had been sent a cadet to India, by the interest of a handsome housemaid (his relation) to a Director, and who by implicitly obeying the private as well as public commands of his then Colonel, had obtained from him a Lieutenant's commission, and was farther honoured with being his constant and only companion.

It happened very unfortunately for this person, that his going to India was not fixed on earlier, as Lord Sutton left that part of the world within two years after his arrival there ; so that it was only in that just distinguisher of merit's power, to put him over the heads of a score or two of young men of some pretensions ; weak ones indeed, it must be confessed, such as melting under the torrid zone, from their infancy, warring with infidels, and losing their blood in the company's service ; trifles of
small

small importance in comparison with the interest of a great man ; and wholly disregarded, till the Colonel left the country, when his successor, although he had strongly recommended Stevens, not seeing with his eyes, and having no occasion for the private services of so clever a fellow, was, unfortunately for him, of opinion he had already advanced higher in rank than he could ever merit, and gave him to understand, there was but one way to retain a promotion in his idea very ill bestowed ; Stevens, always good at a hint, followed his patron, and contrived to render himself as necessary to Lord Sutton in England, as he had been to Colonel Gorget in India.

But the interview with Wilkinson, and that young man's sense and spirit, the genuine emblems of the honour and rectitude of his principles, opened a new scene ; it gave Lord Sutton, in the offspring of his own blood, a desirable companion for his heavy hours, an eligible protection from the insults to which his infirm state subjected a man whom nobody esteemed, and

an opportunity of appeasing the unceasing torments of his conscience, by making some reparation for his cruelty to the woman he had destroyed, in acting kindly to her son. But from what had past, he actually feared to offer Wilkinson his protection, concluding that the discovery of his consanguinity, by revealing the injuries of his mother, must impress him with sentiments of hatred and contempt for the author of them.

Strong, indeed, were the conflicts in the bosom of his son ; it was not without great repugnance he could prevail on himself to bend his knee to a man his heart was enured to abhor ; but the agitation, the emaciated figure, the fond expression of *my son, my son*, repeated in faint and faltering accents by a parent who looked as if quitting the world, softened and affected the noble-minded Wilkinson ;—he was in the attitude of kneeling when Anna entered the room.

Lord Sutton attempted to rise when he saw her, but his weakness prevented that
mark

mark of respect ; he besought her forgiveness, when he hoped the happy discovery of his son, who he would amply reward for his friendship to her, would induce her to grant ; and that an event so very remarkable, might be the means of a general pardon ; to accelerate which, he would voluntarily do her the justice that had been demanded, and immediately related, without any other reserve than what was due to dear self, giving the credit of the villainy to his confederate Frajan ; all the schemes concerted between them to draw her into his snares, avowing his full intention, when she left Layton, to make her every honourable amends in his power. He congratulated her on her present rank, which was briefly hinted to him ; and being as able as willing to make atonement for the errors of his conduct, he entreated it might be no more remembered.

Anna, for the first time in her life, felt herself obdurate to the pleas of penitence. “ Atonement ! ” she repeated to herself, “ what atonement *can* be made to our

“ generous Summers? what *were* the pangs
 “ of Lord Sutton to *his*? how can *he* ever
 “ forgive the wretch by whose baseness he
 “ was first deprived of his wife’s honour,
 “ and then of his reason?” she had yet be-
 fore her the venerable old man struggling
 with his sorrow :—with that impression on
 her mind, she turned from Sutton with un-
 affected contempt and disgust.

Mrs. Wellers, glad to see the prospect
 that opened for Wilkinson, and knowing
 the natural sweetness of Anna’s disposition,
 saw her with wonder turn unmoved by the
 voice of repentance. Wilkinson followed
 her retreating steps—“ Will you not, Lady
 “ Ann,” said he, “ forgive *my father*?”

“ For me, Sir,” answered she, “ to for-
 “ give this unprosperous iniquity, is easy ;
 “ and he will, I presume, make Mrs. Mel-
 “ moth amends for his ungrateful return
 “ to her goodness and hospitality. On
 “ you, Sir, who are his acknowledged son,
 “ he has the most sacred claims ; but there
 “ is one, from whom I am just parted, with
 “ the barbed arrow deep in his heart, from
 “ whence

“ whence no concession, no repentance, no
“ act of kindness can extract it; *his* an-
“ guish must, I fear, my Lord, embitter
“ your days, however happy such a son,
“ and the revived attention of such friends
“ (looking at Mrs. Melmoth) may make
“ you.”

The friends of Anna were as much at a loss as the guilty Lord; they could by no means develop her meaning. Observing the curiosity she excited, “ what arguments,” she continued, “ what plea, or what promises will Lord Sutton use to prevail on the husband of Mr. Wilkinson’s mother, on my good Mrs. Wellers’ friend Bently, the kind protector of Anna Mansel, to forgive him? Who will be his advocate with General Summers? Yes, Madam,” to Mrs. Wellers, “ there the calamity originated that deprived our excellent friend of his senses!”

Lord Sutton started with guilt and astonishment.—It was long since the name of the unhappy General had been heard in the world. He had, it is true, whether from motives

motives of curiosity or fear I will not determine, made private inquiries after the man he had so barbarously injured, and learnt the dreadful consequence of loss of peace was loss of reason; all farther researches proving fruitless, he concluded he had long joined the group of accusing spirits; which, whether from the burning climes of India, or the freezing ones of Iceland, are sure to meet in the presence of an avenging and just Creator.

After a short silence, “ I have none,
“ Madam,” answered the ennobled culprit,
“ but those which flow from your persuasive
“ lips; and be assured, if you will conde-
“ scend to plead my cause, or rather your
“ own, which is mercy and compassion in
“ every succeeding act of my life, I will be
“ governed by you; and in earnest of my
“ intention to court the applause of an an-
“ gel, I will begin with one I know will
“ plead with you beyond all I can say.
“ Mrs. Melmoth, how it was possible for
“ you, so early in life, to involve yourselves
“ so, you best know:—your husband’s
“ grand-

“ grandfather with his estate, which, till
“ the latter part of his life, was little more
“ than half what he left his son, brought
“ up a large and expensive family ; all of
“ whom are now in different lines respect-
“ able and valuable members of the com-
“ munity, extending their influence and
“ connections to different parts of the king-
“ dom, while the heir and representative of
“ the family has been so extremely inatten-
“ tive both to the honour and interest of
“ it, as to sell the greatest part, and deeply
“ mortgage the rest, of the ample estate he
“ inherited from his ancestors.”

“ You must pardon this retrospect—re-
“ spect to the late worthy Mr. Melmoth,
“ my first and best benefactor and friend,
“ calls for it. *My crimes* will be to the
“ advantage of your family ; the paternal
“ estate shall once more be your own.”

“ That it is already,” replied Mrs. Mel-
moth with spirit : “ Lady Ann’s goodness
“ and generosity have already furnished
“ Mr. Melmoth with means to secure that ;
“ and though so much better qualified for
“ a reprover

“ a reprover than your Lordship, without
“ a single reflection.”

“ Well, Madam,” returned the mortified Peer, “ it will be to my honour to follow
“ her example ; and that I may be sure
“ not to repeat the error, it seems, I have
“ been guilty of, my favours shall be con-
“ ferred where no room has been given
“ for reproof. I have, as you now know,
“ a son ; my fortune must be therefore
“ divided ; but I will immediately settle
“ five thousand pounds on each of your
“ daughters.”

“ Will you, my Lord ?” answered she ;
“ Why then I declare you will be very
“ good at last. And”—

She was interrupted in acknowledgements, which came but half cordial from her, by the intervention of Charlotte Madan, who had no idea of standing a silent spectator, while Lord Sutton gave away his fortune by thousands.

“ Come, come, my Lord, don’t be ridiculous,” said the impenetrable woman,
“ do let us go ; you have certainly an in-
“ sane

“fane fit on you this morning.—Five
“thouſand pounds indeed!”

Lady Ann and her party, finding what an addition was going to be added to their converſation, immediately left them, all but Wilkinſon; who, at his earneſt requeſt, accompanied Lord Sutton home, followed by Stevens and his charming miſtreſs.

The Peer now conſcious of the happy conſtrast in his ſituation, on entering his own houſe, from that in which he had left it, was no ſooner in his library, than he revealed to his ſon the hatred he bore Madan; and leaving the terms entirely to him, entreated him to clear the houſe of the infamous incumbrance before he came to it, which he hoped would be ſoon, for a continuance. Wilkinſon ſoon knew enough of his father's wiſhes to authoriſe an immediate alteration in his houſe; he wanted not reſolution or underſtanding. Sorely againſt her will, the divine Charlotte was obliged to ſettle the terms of abdicating with him. He offered her 200l. a year for life. She reſuſed to accept it. He gave
her

her an hour to resolve in. She continued obstinate. He then offered her 100*l*. She was outrageous. “ And,” continued he, “ if you do not in half an hour know your own interest, it shall be taught you by a constable, who will have directions to turn you out without any thing.” Away went Madan to consult her associates; within the time she returned, better acquainted with the character of the man she had to deal with, accepted the annuity, removed her valuables, and set off to London the same night.

Stevens was permitted to continue; and Villars was sent for, as his Lordship’s increasing disorders rendered a nurse necessary, and no one acquitted herself in that character so much to his satisfaction. At Wilkinson’s requisition, and promise to provide for her, she returned to her office, to the great joy of his Lordship.

CHAP. LXXXIX.

Truth will out.

THIS sudden fit of penitence in a man whose whole life has been one continued scene of wickedness, may well surprise my readers—the fact is, Lord Sutton was still consistent—vanity and ostentation were yet the ruling passions of his mind, a sense of present guilt, and a dread of future punishment, assisted perhaps a little by dame nature in his feelings towards Wilkinson, put him entirely off his guard in the recent discovery of his son ; but had that young man come to him in the garb of poverty, destitute of wealth, and friendless, unprotected and unprovided for, far, very far be it from me to insinuate Lord Sutton could have possibly given way to the appearance of repentance and paternal affection in such a degree ; the case was widely different ; Wilkinson was, in a state of genteel independence, the reward of his own merit ;
he

he was moreover on the point of marriage into an ancient and honourable family ; and his connections were of so valuable a sort, that he, who had been aiming at respectability his whole life, without success, now saw an opening, through the offspring of her he had destroyed, which he flattered himself might give him an opportunity to form connections among that part of mankind he *now* beheld in the most favourable point of view—being wholly deserted by the flimsy undesirable attachments his wealth had made, self-interest, therefore, that unerring guide to minds like his, taught him, now to assume the semblance of penitence ; and ostentation gave to Mr. Melmoth's children what gratitude wanted power to enforce. He affected the most profound respect for Lady Ann ; nothing that had the sanction of her approbation but met his hearty concurrence, nor any thing she disliked would he bear to hear mentioned. Miss Herbert was the friend of Lady Ann ; how then could he be less than charmed with his intended daughter-in-law.—The
plan

plan of going to Wales so soon was what he could by no means consent to; he thought, and with reason, as it was in his power to set his son above any kind of traffic, he had a right to his company till his health should be restored; which, though his disorder and weakness increased every hour, he had great hopes of; and as he much wished to see Miss Herbert, Wilkinson wrote a state of the whole affair to Mrs. Herbert, requesting she would prevail on his dear Patty to accompany her to Bath, previous to their journey to Wales.

Anna, whose natural abhorrence still continued to Lord Sutton, and whose affection and respect for General Summers were too great to suffer any personal intercourse to subsist between her and the object of his detestation, was yet prevailed on by her regard for Miss Herbert, and Wilkinson, to answer with civility the letters he was continually pestering her with, under pretence of asking her advice and opinion, and she took care to bind him to his promise on behalf of the Miss Melmoths.

Mr.

Mr. Melmoth, in the mean time, wrote from the Lodge ; he informed them he had changed the deeds, and was then preparing for the reception of his lady : the money, he said, was paid Mr. Ashby at the Grove, in the presence of his sister, whose looks and behaviour were, one spiteful, the other rude—" Oh !" cried Mrs. Melmoth, exultingly, " the very first thing I will do shall " be to visit her, and entertain her with " Lord Sutton's gift to my girl, and Lady " Ann's history ; which she will not out- " live, nor exist in the presence of my " sweet natural daughter." It was time, indeed, Mrs. Melmoth should begin to prepare for her confinement. She gratefully consented to resign Eliza to the care of Lady Ann, whose fondness for her increased every moment. She was a lovely young creature ; her education had been somewhat neglected, but she had now every advantage good instructors and close application could give.

Those occurrences, which threw the interest of her friends so much in her way, contributed

contributed not a little to the quiet of her own mind. Constantly employed, and that in a manner most delightful to herself, as she was contributing to the happiness of others, an avocation so perfectly agreeable to her select friends, that it fully engaged them all, she found herself less unhappy than, in the situation of her mind, might be expected.

Lord Sutton's illness increasing beyond a possibility of recovery, his son's constant attendance on him became absolutely necessary ; for, though Stevens was still there, he could not bear to be left alone with him—However he had *lived* his Lordship chose to *die* in decent company.

From this circumstance it was that his wish to see Miss Herbert had not been mentioned to Anna. He had written to Sir William Edwin his full approbation of his son's choice, and signified his intention of settling ten thousand pounds on Miss Herbert, which, indeed, he had consulted her on ; but of the request that accompanied it she was entirely ignorant ; which
was,

was, that they might be married at Bath—that as his recovery was retarded beyond his hope, he might not lose the comfort of his son's company.]

This request, very reluctantly on the part of Lady Edwin, was granted. On Miss Edwin's entreaties Sir William and his lady, and consequently Mr. Herbert, joined in the party to Bath; and Anna, whose friends were beginning to congratulate her, and themselves, on her returning health and tranquillity, found all her philosophy evaporate at sight of Miss Herbert, who flew into her dressing-room with spirits greatly elated at the unexpected good fortune of her lover, and imparted to her the invitation that had brought them to Bath, entreating her friend to present her to Lord Sutton.

The astonishment of our heroine, the distress and embarrassment this step occasioned her, is not to be conceived. She came to Bath to avoid being witness to scenes she apprehended would affect her life:—by the strangest accident in the world,

world, that circumstance had been the imperceptible means of her being pursued by what she dreaded more than death.

She condemned Herbert, in her own mind, for being prevailed on to come where she was. She accused him of barbarity; and could hardly refrain from openly expressing her displeasure against him, with complaints at the fate that followed her: but it was still in her power to remove, and her ill health gave her an excuse for leaving a place that did not agree with her, and for not going out or seeing company while she stayed.

But Patty was too earnest in her petition, to be introduced by her to Lord Sutton, to be refused. It was at all times painful to Anna to put a negative on any request made to her, consistent with her own ideas of propriety. She was incapable of an act of ill-nature or caprice; and therefore agreed to call for such part of the family as chose to go, at seven in the evening; but excused herself, in a card, from paying her respects to her aunt at their lodgings,

on account of her health. This could be hardly called an excuse; it was confirmed by the alteration in her looks; for neyer did there breathe so exact a picture of Shakespeare's Love-lorn maid; she pined in thought; and her solicitude to deceive her friends was so great, that she, it might be literally and truly said, smiled at grief.

Miss Herbert left her exceedingly shocked; and meeting her brother as she was going into her lodgings, "Oh! Charles," said she, "Lady Ann Trevannion is very ill—you cannot think how she is altered"—"Good heavens! what is the matter, brother? How pale you are!"—He answered not, but passed on. She repeated her bad news to Lady Edwin and Mrs. Herbert; they were both extremely concerned, and were going to her directly, but Wilkinson, who had not yet, though it was his father's particular request, assumed the name of Gorget, coming to wait on Sir William, to name the trust for Patty's settlement, they were prevented.

Miss Edwin then made her appearance; she

she had been, she said, half the town over, and actually did leave a card at Anna's door.

Mr. Summers, at dinner, mentioned a circumstance that appeared odd to him; he met Miss Edwin, and not knowing the family were come to Bath, was rather surprised; he had the curiosity to see where she went; she had not passed him many paces before she was joined by a young officer, and on enquiry of a chairman who belonged to the house he saw her enter, found Mrs. Edwin was likewise at Bath, and lodged there.

Mrs. Wellers, at this intelligence, very seriously remonstrated against concealing, at least, from Sir William and Lady Edwin, the improper connection their daughter was forming; there would else, she was sure, be another tragical scene in the family; Anna would not hear of any kind of interference from her friends; and being hurt at Mrs. Wellers' persisting in the justice of the act, it was dropped.

In the evening, having apprised Lord Sutton of her intentions, Lady Anna called

for Mrs. and Miss Herbert; Lady Cecilia refusing to visit, on any terms, a man who had offered such indignities to her family, did not accompany them, but engaged with Sir William to meet her at their return at her own house. They were received at Sutton-House by Mr. Wilkinson, and conducted into the library which adjoined his Lordship's dressing-room, and was the farthest place his weakness would suffer him to be moved to.

He was rejoiced to see Lady Ann on any occasion, and in this company her's was doubly welcome; he exhibited his grandeur, and talked very largely of the great things he meant to do for his son; he was very rich, and, as he had informed Sir William Edwin this morning, when he did him the honour of calling on him, he intended to leave the principal part of his fortune to his son, and his heirs.

He presented Miss Herbert with a very fine suit of pearl, and some valuable diamonds, which looking at Anna, with a sigh he could not restrain, he said, in a low voice,

voice, were designed for another occasion.

Mrs. Herbert then told him, she was at a loss, kind as he was to her daughter, how to mention Lady Cecilia's family reason for chusing Miss Edwin should be married at Trevannion; all her generation but one had plighted *their* vows at the family chapel, and all but *that* one had been prosperous and happy. Patty had engaged to accompany her cousin to the altar; and although Lady Edwin did not say any thing, she was sure it would very much displease and hurt her if any alteration took place; the obligations of her family to her brother and sister, she added, were so numerous, as well as binding, it would be great pain she should take any step which did not meet their entire approbation.

Anna, who longed to get rid of them at any rate, seconded Mrs. Herbert; encouraged by so powerful an advocate, she ventured to ask his Lordship permission for his son's accompanying them to Wales, and there to have the two ceremonies perform-

ed, as before agreed, at one time ; with his usual deference and partiality to Lady Ann, he consented to their request, on condition his son's stay did not exceed a fortnight : thus circumscribed in point of time, which it was the more necessary for Wilkinson to observe, as his Lordship's state of health was so very precarious, when they returned, Lady Edwin fixed on leaving Bath the next day.

CHAP. XC.

Female Philosophy.

THE alteration in the looks of our heroine was too striking to escape the notice of Lady Edwin—Greatly alarmed, she renewed her entreaties for her to accompany them into Wales, but finding she could not prevail, told her she would be denied no longer than till her daughter was married : Trevannion-House, which had been so long untenanted,

untenanted, must wait another summer; she would not be denied; her dear niece must positively finish this with her.

Anna smiled; but nothing was farther from her thoughts than going to any place where it was possible to meet Charles Herbert and his bride—her feelings convinced her, that this was a trial she was not equal to—indeed the effect the idea of being near them had on her health, rendered the resolution to avoid them absolutely necessary—She had been in a constant flutter of spirits from the instant of their arrival—she dreaded to meet Mr. Herbert, yet her eyes were perpetually strained after each passing object—She knew *he* would not presume to come to her house; yet every rap at the door threw her into a violent palpitation; she gasped for breath when his name was mentioned; but all other subjects on which the conversation turned during the time her aunt stayed, wanted power to engage her attention; the visible changes of her countenance in the course of the evening were observed with equal sorrow and anxie-

ty by the friendly Mrs. Wellers. When Lady Edwin took her leave, Anna, who had borne up like a true heroine, owned she found herself very much indisposed—the agitation of her spirits was so great, that a fever of the hectic kind, to which she was very subject, increased with such violence before next morning, that quiet was recommended by her physician, as the only means of preventing its still farther alarm—Lady Edwin was admitted for five minutes only; her concern for her niece was sincere and unaffected; she told Mrs. Wellers, though the marriage of her daughter were of such importance to her peace, she did not think it possible she could survive any accident that might happen to break it off; yet her amiable niece was too dear, to be left in such a state: if, therefore, a very favourable alteration did not take place in her health, she would postpone her journey, in order to give Lady Ann her personal attendance.

Mrs. Wellers saw, in Lady Edwin's solicitude to accomplish the union between Charles and Cecilia, the folly of hoping that
any

any thing could happen from procrastination, in the least flattering to her wishes—she knew the honour of the family could not be more engaged than the delicacy of Anna, who would shudder at the thought of connecting herself with a man who had been guilty of a breach of contract, nor indeed had she any idea that her fortitude would be put to such a trial by Mr. Herbert.

It was, therefore, as matters stood, her opinion, the sooner the wedding was solemnized, the sooner Lady Ann would recover her health and peace; the one much injured, and the other entirely broken—She imparted her thoughts to Mr. Mansel, who coincided with her, and joined her in entreaties to their young friend, to consider, before it was too late, the injury she was doing herself, and the pain she inflicted on her friends.

Anna owned the propriety of their arguments, and more severely condemned her own weakness than it was possible for them to do, but bewailed her inability to conquer it.

“ If this fresh aggravation had not happened,” said she, “ change of scene, time, “ and the many calls of humanity and charity, on the power I am invested with, “ by filling my time in the exercises of benevolence, might have done much for “ me—but fate itself pursues me—the evil “ I dread more than the deprivation of my “ existence, follows my steps—would to “ God they were married—I really believe “ in my present state of mind, that event “ only can give me one moment’s ease.”

As this was precisely the opinion of both Mrs. Wellers and Mr. Mansel, they informed her of the resolution Lady Edwin had taken to wait her recocery, and were proceeding to urge the necessity there was for her to summon all her resolution at this important crisis—when Anna, sensible of what prudence, honour, and delicacy demanded, interrupted them—“ Oh ! say no “ more, I am better now, I will rise this “ moment—let them go—tell my aunt I “ am well, quite well ; pray send directly.” “ —Your recovery, my dear,” said Mrs. “ Wellers,

“ Wellers, will appear a little too sudden ;
“ when Lady Edwin calls we will attri-
“ bute your indisposition to a cold, and
“ that may be represented as slight as you
“ please ; we will then leave to Mr. Man-
“ sel the urging the uncertain life of Lord
“ Sutton, to induce them to keep to their
“ plan of leaving Bath, and I trust, when
“ no longer harrassed by those continual
“ interruptions, you will then be restored
“ to the power of feeling that happiness in
“ your own bosom, which your benefi-
“ cent disposition leads you to extend to
“ others.”

Mr. Mansel's solicitude not being less, and his sentiments exactly those of Mrs. Wellers, he instantly went to Sir William Edwin's to begin his part of the business ; here he met Mr. Wilkinson, who informed them the physicians had at a consultation that morning declared, they did not think it possible Lord Sutton could live a month ; and though this was not told him, the very small hopes they gave rendered him very earnest to have the marriage over. Wil-

kinson ventured to hint a wish, that it might be concluded at Bath ; Lady Edwin opposed it, and that very strenuously ; she had her own private reasons for hastening the marriage of Cecilia, and foresaw if they stayed longer at Bath, that must of course be deferred ; a thing of all others the least desirable to her. Charles Herbert sat a silent auditor of this conversation, in which Sir William and Mr. Mansel joined, giving it as their decided opinion, the union of Mr. Wilkinon and Miss Herbert ought on no account to be deferred. Mrs. Herbert considering the penitence of such a man as Lord Sutton, might proceed more from caprice and terror of death, than any real good disposition, and consequently not to be depended on, was likewise an advocate for expediting the nuptials. Lady Ann's health was the only point that embarrassed her aunt : though Mr. Mansel assured her it was in no danger ; and as she had the satisfaction of finding Anna up and cheerful in the evening, she took a very affectionate leave, and the family set out the

the next morning for Wales—Neither Wilkinson nor Mansel went with them, Lord Sutton having peevishly lessened the leave of absence, from a fortnight to eight days ; it was judged expedient for the family to go first, and that when all was ready, the bridegroom should, accompanied by Mr. Mansel, follow them to Dennis Place.

Patty and her lover took leave of Anna in the evening ; she rejoiced when she found they were actually gone, and a very acceptable cessation to her gloomy reflections arrived the next day in her uncle and Mr. Melmoth ; Mrs. Melmoth's situation rendered it proper she should leave Bath ; the Lodge was prepared for her reception : the tenants and dependants of that respectable family were impatient to hail the return of the Squire to the mansion of his ancestors—it was with regret on all sides this separation was consented to, and Mrs. Melmoth protested she could not stir till Lady Ann promised to see her before she went to Wales, which she very readily did.

Eliza continued with our heroine ; and
the

the Melmoth family left Bath with the happy certainty of entering gates they feared were for ever shut to their approach, of looking with conscious right and authority round those domains, the value and beauty of which had been disregarded by their possessors till the instant they were on the point of losing an earthly paradise by their own folly and extravagance; their pleasure and their joy were the more sensible, as they felt, in their present happiness, the reward of their former benevolence. Mr. Mordant, with whom justice and generosity were only so far divided as to suffer the former to precede the latter, had not only taken the mortgage out of Mr. Ashby's hands, but in a manner that flattered, instead of wounding, the pride of Mr. Melmoth, reimbursed him for the expences of Anna's education in so liberal a style and manner, that plenty, as well as peace, again dwelt at Melmoth lodge.

The young Eliza now became the particular care of Anna; Mr. Summers was her moral, and Mr. Mansel her divine preceptor:

tor: in this pleasing employment Anna hoped to find relief from the corroding and anxious feelings of her mind ; but those were too potent to be thus evaded ; her fever increased, the intermissions became less regular, and her appetite entirely failed ; the hours usually devoted to sleep were those in which she indulged in a luxury of grief ; her fallen eyes and wan cheeks spoke a language it was not possible for love and friendship to misapprehend : the first physicians were again called in : Mr. Mordant's uneasiness was only to be equalled by that of the General ; Mansel durst not trust himself to look at her, and Mrs. Wellers' own health was so much affected, it was often out of her power to attend her young friend ; Mrs. Clarke was therefore sent for down express, and added another mourner to the melancholy group. Wilkinson was all impatience for his summons, but nevertheless felt in the general solicitude for a life so dear : the doctors were wearied with questions ; yet, what answers could they return, consistent with the skill they professed, but
what

what they had already given—" that much
" might be hoped from her youth and
" constitution, but more, infinitely more,
" depended on the state of her mind."

Anna heard their opinions without emotion, but her countenance exhibited too little concern in their prognostics to please her uncle.

He conjured her not to break his heart by her unaccountable sadness : she averred, all that lay with herself was willingly done to regain her lost health ; " but if," said she, it is the will of my Maker to call me from a life in which, excepting the love of a few friends, I have never known pleasure, at so early a period, who shall arraign his wisdom !"

" Oh Anna !" answered Mr. Summers, " do you esteem the love of a few friends a trifle ! Do not affect an apathy for which your sensibility disqualifies you ! Believe me, the love of real friends is Heaven's best gift ; it is a treasure far more valuable than your estate."

" I esteem it so," returned she, " my ever
" kind

“ kind monitor; but, valuable as it is, call
“ me not ungrateful: I had greedily set my
“ heart on more; the disappointment, you
“ see, has hurt me. I cannot fly from my-
“ self, else would I be any living being who
“ is innocent, rather than Ann Trevannion:
“ but, unhappy as I confess I am, you, I
“ am sure, alarm yourselves without rea-
“ son. If this illness be final, it must great-
“ ly increase; I have myself no forebod-
“ ings; my sufferings are merely mental;
“ it may, perhaps, affect my health, but
“ not, I hope, fatally.—I have heard the
“ South of France”—

“ Oh,” cried the General, “ it is the
“ very place for you.”

“ And,” continued Anna, taking her un-
cle’s hand, which she pressed to her lips
with the utmost warmth, both of duty and
affection, “ if that will not do, my dear and
“ honoured uncle, we will go with you to
“ Jamaica; and we will steal my good ma-
“ ternal friend from her worthy husband,
“ if we cannot prevail on him to accom-
“ pany us. What would I not do, where
“ would

“ would I not go, to add to the happiness
“ of such friends ?—Let us instantly take
“ an airing—Bristol is recommended ; if
“ the place pleases us, we will go there,
“ just to beguile the time.—I cannot leave
“ England without Mr. Mansel ;—and if it
“ should not be possible for my dear Mrs.
“ Wellers to go ;—

“ Oh,” interrupted the good woman,
“ don’t mention that ; depend on it I will
“ not leave you, till your health is re-esta-
“ blished, though I am half an invalid my-
“ self.”—The carriage was ordered. Mr.
Mordant and the General chose to go on
horseback.—The environs of Bristol are,
perhaps, the most beautiful and picturesque
in the world. As they rode over the
downs, Mr. Mansel shewed them the Welch
hills, in the way to Llandore.—Anna
started.—

“ That high one, which seems to lose its
“ top in the clouds,” said the good man,
“ is very plainly discernable from the as-
“ cent, at the back of Llandore castle ;”—
a starting tear accompanied recollection.

He

He continued, " Often, my dear Anna,
 " have I looked from thence toward it,
 " with a secret wish to know where you
 " was, and a fervent hope you would
 " once again repass it ; when the happiest
 " among the happy, no wish ungratified,
 " no prayer unanswered, I carried down
 " my departed saint, we went that road."

" Oh, Sir," answered Anna, her face
 bathed in tears, while he strove to conceal
 his, " no more lead to the memory of that
 " blessed woman ; no more retrace that
 " spot, those scenes ! which are closed on
 " me for ever ; misery and despair are the
 " only reliques of the peaceful serenity of
 " four happy years spent at dear Llandore.
 " Mrs. Mansel's death anticipated misfor-
 " tunes meant to elucidate the wisdom of
 " Providence ; but there, alas ! my present
 " sorrow did not originate ; too late were
 " the warnings of my ever lamented friend.
 " Your village, your house, the white chim-
 " nies of Llandore, are this moment in
 " my sight : there you sit in your morning
 " gown, reading ; here is my more than
 " mother,

“ mother, trying on a pair of spectacles,
“ laughing at her own figure in them :
“ between you stands the happiest of or-
“ phans, just equipt to go with dear Miss
“ Herbert to the castle, detained only to
“ receive a charge, delivered in the voice
“ of kindness, not to be out late ; not to
“ venture through farmer Jones’s field,
“ and not to overheat myself by walking.
“ Oh, that all my life had been passed in
“ that humble style !”—Here a flood of
tears, in which her reverend friend accom-
panied her, gave some ease to her heart,
bursting as it was with anguish, and the
most tormenting recollections.

Mr. Mordant then joining them with his observations on the country, she was suffered to indulge in silence reflections which contributed not to the benefit she hoped from the air and exercise.

At Clifton, a remarkably pretty house, apparently new-fitted up, in a romantic spot, overlooking the wells, in full view of the river and St. Vincent’s rock, engaged their notice, and Anna, much pleased with
the

the situation, stopped to inquire what accommodation there was.

The ladies were shewn into a very neat drawing-room, while the gentlemen were admiring the prospects round; on their proceeding to take a farther view of the house, a person passed Anna hastily, who she immediately recollected to be Mrs. Hughes, the friendly widow to whose humanity she had been so much obliged when in the small-pox; her first emotions were those of joy at seeing a person to whom she was so much indebted, and having no idea the woman could have any objection to a rencontre, which she predetermined should be to her advantage, she followed her up stairs into a small room, where to her astonishment, on a table lay the coat and train, of which she had been robbed, and which Mrs. Hughes was hastily catching up. Surprise now took the place of pleasure—might she believe her eyes—were it possible—could Mrs. Hughes be the person whose dishonesty caused her such sorrow? The poor woman, when she saw Anna had
fixed

fixed her eyes on the coat, dropped her's, in evident confusion : neither spoke till joined by Mrs. Wellers.

Lady Ann's countenance, her astonished look at the coat so often described, soon explained the matter.

"What," cried Mrs. Wellers, "you have then discovered the thief."

Another person at this moment appeared, as little expected, though perfectly known ; it was Bates ; who, kneeling at the feet of Lady Ann, confessed the robbery, finding he could not conceal it without suffering the odium to lay on his sister.

The whole transaction reflected so much on the unhappy Edwin, that Anna was rejoiced there were no other witnesses to a discovery so little to his credit ; and the native goodness of her heart exulted to find, though so nearly related, Mrs. Hughes was unacquainted with the depravity of her brother.

Bates saved some money in Mr. Edwin's service, which he increased by marrying a woman of small dower, and had taken
this

this house, which he meant to let in lodgings; Mrs. Hughes was at that time on a visit to his wife, and they had been very busy, looking over and arranging his things, when Anna's carriage stopped; Mrs. Bates attended the ladies to the apartments; the first glance Bates had of our heroine, knowing how his wife and sister were employed, in the utmost hurry he sent the latter to put the fine coat and train they had been admiring, out of sight, without explaining his reason.

The lively gratitude of Anna prevented its being hid; and her regard for Lady Edwin, and the honour of her family, forbade her saying any thing more on the subject, than privately stipulating for its being restored to Mrs. Desmoulins, with which Bates was glad to come off.

This transaction prevented her taking the house; and after making Mrs. Hughes a present suitable to her own ideas of the services she had rendered her, they returned to Bath, amused if not diverted: here they found a chaise at the door, and Wilkinson

kinson impatiently waiting with the welcome mandate, and letters for Lady Ann from her friends at Dennis Place.

“ *Now, Anna,*” whispered Mrs. Wellers, “ for your fortitude ; *now* let your sense of propriety, the dignity of your rank, and the pride of your sex support you.”

“ I know,” answered she, trembling and out of breath, “ I shall be better when it is over :” she took the hand of Mansel as he passed, kissed her’s to Wilkinson, and hurried to her apartment.

Mansel having been in daily expectation of his summons, was instantly ready, and with strict charge from Mrs. Wellers to send an express the moment the ceremony was performed, he took a reluctant leave.

C H A P. XCI.

The Wedding.

THE hard trial was now at hand ; poor Anna, in this arduous moment, endeavoured to recollect all the lessons she had been taught for her own practice, and all she had observed in her friends : there was not, in her researches, a single example, from whence she could derive strength of mind. Philosophy would not, and reflection could not, administer the consolation she so much wanted ; to fly from her own thoughts was the only means that offered of comfort ; in this expedient Mrs. Wellers was her indefatigable assistant : she hurried her from one amusement to another ; still pointing out to her the admiration she excited, and the homage paid to her merit, as well as charms. Ever prudent, judicious, and kind, she neither a moment lost sight of what, at such a critical and painful

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period, was due to friendship, nor studiously avoided the subject, whenever Anna mentioned the Edwins, or Herbert ; nevertheless, the intervening space would have been still more tedious and unhappy, had it not been diverted by incidents that engrossed some part of their attention.

Stevens called on Lady Ann the third morning after Mr. Wilkinson had left Bath, with a most terrible account of the state of Lord Sutton's mind and health ; he acknowledged himself to have long been a member of the Catholic church, though he had not revealed his religious principles, on account, for many years, of his commission, and lately he had not thought of any religion ; but now the reproaches of his conscience were so strong ; absolution must be had at any price ; and nothing would satisfy him but sending for a priest, a countryman of his father's, now at Bath, in the train of a foreign ambassador.

Stevens, if he had not honesty enough to be really concerned for the interest of Wilkinson, had, at least, a competent share
of

of regard for his own, which he conceived in a more promising line in the hands of a man of honour, than in that of a bigoted priest; he therefore entreated Lady Ann to interfere; but a look from her venerable friend had more force in her gentle bosom than all he could say; even though the interest of Patty was at stake, she begged to be excused; and that no inducement might be wanting to the abandoning the bad man to his destiny, before Stevens left her, a poor woman sent a petition to be admitted.

At another time, perhaps, she might have been referred to Clarke; but, at this, to divert the passing moment, was all that Mrs. Wellers wished; she therefore begged Lady Ann to admit her.

A tall, haggard, dirty woman now entered, of whose person Anna had not the least recollection; she was beginning, in broken English, an apology; when, seeing the Captain, her humble style was instantly changed into a volley of abuse on him and his noble patron, in the course of

which our heroine understood, to her infinite surprise, this person was no other than Madam Frajan, and that the subject of her anger was not being rewarded suitable to her estimation of the services she had rendered Lord Sutton in her injurious conduct to Anna. In the course of her accusations, mixed with imprecations shocking to the ears of the respectable inmates of Lady Ann Trevannion's house, who, all but Stevens, stood aghast, she pourtrayed her own and the wickedness of her associate ; he, indeed, having been active in one part of what she called her ill usage, and more used to such language, knew how to return her dialect.

When, however, Mr. Mordant heard her accuse him of urging her to leave Miss Edwin's service, and receiving from her, in the name of his Lord, Mrs. Melmoth's lace, to prevent her obtaining her own pardon, by a free confession, he could hold no more, no more restrain his rage ; the evident wretchedness of her circumstances lost all claim to charity, the iniquities of
her

her life demanded punishment, and both these partners in vice were thrust out of the house with the contempt and abhorrence they deserved.

When they retired to dress, Mrs. Wellers proposed to Anna going to the play, where the soul-harrowing Siddons was to perform *Isabella*. With a faint smile, she declined going out any more; this was, perhaps, the very last day she might think on her Herbert without a crime; the indissoluble knot might be already tied; she would spend it in once more living over in idea the happy, happy moments she had known with him; she would indulge, for the last time, in a retrospect of his actions, both at *Llandore* and since; she would learn fortitude from his example; she would trace, with her pencil, the graces of his person, as they dwelt on her memory, and her estimation of perfection should always be guided by those of his mind.

There was a solemnity in her manner during this declaration; and, when she calmly opened her port folio, it affected

Mrs. Wellers ; without alarming her, she rang for her work-bag, and sent an apology to the gentlemen for not joining them the remainder of the day.

The hours passed in a solemn kind of undescribable sadness, and the close of the day had already arrived, without the dreaded, yet wished for, messenger from Dennis Place.

Mr. Mordant and the General were gone to the play, and a stillness pervaded in the house, with which the feelings of its lovely Mistress ill accorded ; with each revolving hour her spirits flagged, and the remonstrances of friendship were lost in the more piercing claims of sensibility. She was in a silent flood of tears, when a loud rap at the door alarmed her.

She started.—“ I will not see any body.”

“ I have given directions,” answered Mrs. Wellers.—The door opened.

With looks of transport, and unspeakable joy, in rushed Mr. Herbert.

The ladies screamed.

He was in a moment at the feet of
Anna.

Anna. He seized her hand : it was in vain she struggled to withdraw it, that she commanded him to rise—to retire.

Never, never more would he give up the precious pledge.—She was his own—his invaluable, his destined Anna.

What did he mean ?—Again he was commanded to retire.

No longer the despairing, the hopeless Herbert,—he dared to disobey, and to glory in his disobedience. He would not quit his posture till he read in the eyes of his beloved Anna the joy, the ecstasy himself felt at his freedom ; had she not confessed she loved her Herbert ? He was, again he assured her, free. She must forgive his transports ; the sound was so joyful, he would have it resound through the world, “ Charles Herbert was disengaged from Cecilia Edwin.—He was in sight of all earthly bliss—he was at liberty to pour forth the long, long restrained love and adoration of his soul ;—he was at the feet of Anna Trevannion.”

“ There,” said he, with the triumph of truth.

truth in his countenance, and ecstacy in his manner, “is the dear mandate of bliss” —giving into the hands of Mrs. Wellers an open letter, while his full heart shone in his fine eyes, and he was unable to utter another syllable—but though silent he wanted not animation: the honest joy of his fond heart bathed the hand he held with drops of love and rapture—his agitations were too strong for articulation, and he indulged the transport of reading in the countenance of her he loved, a doubtful joy mixed with evident surprise.

Herbert’s positive declarations of freedom carried too much the semblance of truth to be doubted; but how could it be—nothing, Anna thought, but the death of Cecilia could have given him authority to address her with such assured hope of success, and that idea shocked her—he was bid to rise—he was disobedient—he would not stir.

“Have you read that divine letter, madam,” said he, addressing himself to Mrs. Wellers, “from the kind Cecilia Edwin?”

“Ah! Charles,” cried Anna, “what have

“ have you done? Have you then humbled
“ me to the dust by revealing my folly to
“ her? And do you think I will accept of
“ a dismissal you have prevailed on her to
“ give? Were I so groveling in my ideas,
“ so mean in my principles, how would
“ you reconcile your conduct to Sir Wil-
“ liam and Lady Edwin, to yourself, to
“ me, and to the world?”

“ Oh! to be sure, my angel,” answered
Herbert, “ Cecilia Edwin is the woman to
“ give up a point in consideration of an-
“ other’s happiness, and your Charles the
“ man in the world to afford her a triumph
“ over his Anna. But Mrs. Wellers, though
“ by your delighted looks I perceive you
“ have read those celestial lines, on each
“ syllable of which I have hung with in-
“ expressible transport, you do not con-
“ gratulate me; you have not communi-
“ cated them to my Anna. Will you be so
“ good as to read it out, or shall I?”

“ Oh! pray take it yourself,” answered
the good woman, smiling through her
tears, and folding her young friend to her
L 5 heart,

heart, with an emotion she could not resist, though her sense of female delicacy kept her silent.

“ Now, Madam,” said the intoxicated Charles, “ let me read to you a letter I
“ have gone through at least a thousand
“ times already ; there is not a sentence in
“ it I have not separately blessed over and
“ over.”

He was beginning—but the agitation of our heroine became too strong to suffer him to proceed. Mrs. Wellers, alarmed at the changes in her countenance, begged him to retire, and leave the letters with her. He was unwilling to obey ;—but on her referring him to the looks of Anna as a confirmation of her ill health, and on promise of re-admission, he left the room ; and then, no witness present, the amiable woman alternately soothed and congratulated her friend ; and the absence of the lover, by leaving them without constraint, soon gave Anna courage to read as follows :

“ To

“ To CHARLES HERBERT, *Esq.*

“ And did you really suppose, cousin, Cecilia Edwin meant to make you master of her person and fortune? One only motive could have prevailed on her to have been guilty of such a preposterous piece of folly—that of punishing your presumption, and of being a perpetual plague to the whining love-sick Anna. But it would have been too much to dedicate my life to such a contemptible purpose. When next I see you, I shall bear the name of him who has my heart; and of this I should have informed you when you insulted me with a petition to be rejected, had not your insolence deserved the punishment of suspense.

C. EDWIN.”

“ If,” said she faintly, “ this is true! “ if—” “ Oh! no if’s, for God’s sake,” answered Mrs. Wellers, “ I must perform “ my promise, Mr. Herbert must sup with

“us.”—Not forbid by the blushing Anna, he was re-admitted.

Can language of any kind do justice to the felicity of this happy evening, when two amiable young persons found (without any reproachable effort of their own) the hitherto unfurmountable bars which opposed their union, totally removed ; unrestrained by a sense of impropriety, unawed by fear, unconscious of guilt, blessed with affluence beyond their wishes, when fate, which had so long and invariably followed them with omens of their eternal separation, now relenting, presented to their view uninterrupted peace and endless happiness : if there is a language adequate to the description of the raptures of two sensible minds so situated, I am unacquainted with it. Sacred be their love, as void of guilt were their sorrows.

They parted not till two o'clock, and then too happy to rest ; but how different may be the effects from one cause ; the want of sleep left no visible traces on the countenance of our heroine ; she was indeed
in

in no haste to leave her apartment, but Mrs. Wellers, whose pleasure was without bounds, found her dressed, sweet as the opening rose, her muslin levet and linen only to be outdone in whiteness by the skin they covered. Joy danced in her eyes, and her beautiful mouth now adorned with the smile of tranquillity, half shewed a double row of pearl, and exhibited to the most enchanting advantage the innumerable dimples which surrounded it. The visible satisfaction this lively display of inward peace gave Mrs. Wellers, added fresh grace to her smiles; and returning her silent salute with mutual exchanges of those looks true cordiality only can send forth, they descended to the breakfast room.

The General and Mr. Mordant had been fixing their rout to France, and seriously lamenting the occasion which obliged them to take it, when Mr. Herbert was announced.

“Herbert!” repeated Mr. Mordant in astonishment.

“The same, dear Sir,” answered the
still

still overjoyed Charles; "he comes to demand your congratulations."

"On your marriage to be sure," answered Mr. Mordant; "but what can have brought you so soon to Bath; is Mrs. Herbert with you? Is Wilkinson come?"

"Not so fast, my dear Sir," returned Herbert. "No, you are, if you please, to gratulate me on my *not* being married; and—"

Here Mrs. Wellers, who had gone to fetch Anna, entered, followed by the divinity he adored;—he flew to meet her.

"Hey!" said the General, the whole matter then striking him, "So, so, so, you have found a physician, and we shall have no occasion to go to France."

"Nor will my dear niece, I fear, follow me to Jamaica," joined Mr. Mordant.

Anna curtsied to both, and answered her lover's fond inquiries after her health, with grace and ease.

When they were seated, she told him he should have the honour of giving the water

to

to Mrs. Wellers; and the servant being dismissed, conscious of the rectitude of her sentiments, and as free from all affectation, as incapable of deceit;—above the little arts which women, who feel a void of real modesty, by overstraining the appearance of that beautiful quality, have recourse to, in vain hope of concealing their unamiable deficiency, her understanding put sheepishness out of her character, and her native dignity secured her from the censure of boldness, possessing the happy medium in every instance but one; it was consistent with her ideas of grateful propriety, to make a frank acknowledgment to her friends of those sentiments she had not concealed from her lover.

After a little hesitation, in which sensibility was far more visible than shame, she owned her predilection for Mr. Herbert from the first of her acquaintance; the progress it had made in her affection had been, she said, as irresistible as rapid; she mentioned him to Mr. Mordant as the cause of her declining the addresses of his amiable son;

son ; nor could she restrain her tears in repeating her sufferings at supposing him dead, from the accidental information of the magazine ; her distress, when the same moment that discovered his existence gave her such undoubted proofs of his engagement to Miss Edwin, it was unnecessary to repeat ; but she concluded with assuring them, if it yet should appear to her uncle and Mr. Summers, that her sentiments in Mr. Herbert's favour were the effect of caprice or want of judgment in her, instead of desert in him, she should not indeed promise to cease loving him, but would never marry without, not only their consent, but approbation ; and then leaving him to the explanation and vindication of his own actions, she retired, declining the attendance of Mrs. Wellers. “ You, my dear Madam,” said she, “ must stay—you shall judge for me, I am too partial to decide for myself.”

Herbert, all sense and elegance, liberal in his ideas, and just in his actions, a scholar and a gentleman, his principles unvitiated,
his

his morals uncorrupted, not warmer in his sense of honour than in his love of truth, needed not an advocate with his judges ; they saw Anna's partiality, they approved the object which inspired it, and only wondered any one who knew both, could think of separating two people who seemed born for each other.

CHAP. XCII.

A Trip to the North.

MR. Herbert had now to account to them, as he had before done to Anna, for his sudden enfranchisement.

He told them, that the whole journey down, Miss Edwin's behaviour was fullen, haughty, and reserved to all the party ; that her supercilious behaviour knew no distinction of persons, but was extended to
her

her father and mother, with as little ceremony as to Patty and himself ; infomuch that Lady Edwin, it was easy to perceive, with great difficulty forebore her resentment. On their arrival at Dennis Place, she affected retirement, but made no objection to the day proposed for their nuptials ; that as to himself, spite of his internal wretchedness, he endeavoured to persevere in the kind of behaviour he had always adopted, which was polite and friendly ; he had pretended to no more. To the great diversion of Sir William, and the surprise of every body else, their aunt Winifred, formerly her ridicule, was her favourite friend and chief companion, and the only person about the house with whom she chose to converse.

On the evening preceding their nuptials, which was the day Mr. Mansel and Wilkinson were expected, the old chapel being cleared and ornamented for the purpose, the neighbourhood invited, and preparations made to entertain the whole country,

Cecilia,

Cecilia, without waiting to see them, retired to her apartment.

Lady Edwin was surprised and hurt at such a whim, as Patty (though going to be united to the object of her choice) having been brought down for the express purpose of accompanying her cousin, would certainly, at such a delicate period, wish for a companion of her own age and sex ; but remonstrances were vain, she continued obstinate, and carried her point.

“ Mansel and Wilkinson arrived in the evening. A prey to my own dreadful reflections, I had not,” continued he, “ a thought of rest ; but I attended my dear mother early to her chamber, when, for the first time, she hinted her fears, I was not happy in *my*, or rather *her*, choice.

“ I made no answer to this but too true surmise ; little did the best and tenderest of mothers imagine *what* reigned without a rival in my soul : had she but suspected I loved, her sense of honour and of justice would have rendered her miserable ; but as no remedy offered to prevent this
“ dreadful

“ dreadful sacrifice but what would involve
“ her in my ruin, and wound the hearts of
“ Sir William and Lady Edwin, I suffered
“ her to continue in ignorance of my feel-
“ ings.—Dear woman, on her knees she
“ prayed for blessings on her children.

“ She was sure I might mould my cousin,
“ who had always loved me, into what
“ form I pleased ; and the gratitude and
“ good-nature her partiality gave me credit
“ for, would insure our happiness ; I left
“ her, extremely affected by her maternal
“ goodness, my soul rent with the idea of
“ the approaching ceremony, which I felt
“ would render the whole creation an uni-
“ versal blank to me. In crossing the gal-
“ lery, I was surprized with the glimpse of
“ Cecilia hastily descending the stairs ; but
“ as every hour was marked with fresh whim
“ and caprice, when I was sure it was her,
“ it gave me no farther thought.

“ What my reflections were during that
“ painful night I will not (since, thank
“ God ! it is past) repeat : I can only at-
“ tempt to expiate my offence to Heaven
“ by

“ by confessing, such were my sorrows, I
“ found it impossible to rest, and therefore
“ went not to bed. Every revolving mo-
“ ment, while recollection brought to my
“ memory all the past, at the same instant
“ reminding me how soon, how very soon,
“ by a voluntary act of my own, I must for-
“ ever relinquish all claim on the woman
“ I adored, and plight my faith to one I
“ despised, my distress became so poignant,
“ I own it with shame, I am not sure but
“ my mother’s heart would have been
“ wounded by a second suicide in her fa-
“ mily, had not the fatal engagement been
“ so happily broken off. The distraction
“ of my ideas was increased by the bustle
“ and hurry which, by break of day, filled
“ the house; and before six, by the sight
“ of my meek sister hanging on the arm of
“ her beloved Wilkinson, whose looks, bent
“ in cordial love, even at that distance,
“ conveyed to me a picture of the rapture
“ of his mind : I was turning from them,
“ my imagination sickening at the contrast
“ in my own situation, when a fresh com-
“ motion

“ motion in the house, and Patty’s hasty
“ summons from the garden, excited for a
“ moment my curiosity, which, however,
“ quickly vanished : too miserable to fear
“ its aggravation, I was again lost in de-
“ spair ; I had nothing, I thought, to fear,
“ and less to hope, from whatever might
“ be going forward : happy mistake ! .My
“ mother and Lady Edwin entered my
“ room ; the former with looks of com-
“ passion, the latter deprived, by anger and
“ distress, of the power of utterance, pale,
“ and shaking at every nerve.

“ My dear son,” said my mother, “ you
“ must arm yourself with patience.”

“ Ah ! what has happened !” cried I,
concluding (my mind ever on *one* subject)
some dreadful news from Bath.

“ Lady Edwin, then, in an agony, found
“ speech : Cecilia, said she, that disgrace
“ to my blood, that dishonour to my race,
“ has eloped : all my care for her is lost,
“ all my solicitude vain—my anxious
“ hours, my sleepless nights, my ardent
“ prayers, of no effect—unhappy woman
“ that

“ that I am—the distress of my poor bro-
“ ther is visited on my devoted head—
“ childless and wretched, for never will I
“ own or receive that ill-principled girl—
“ I have no hope or comfort in my own
“ posterity.

“ My respect for Lady Edwin, my ve-
“ neration of her sorrows, nor compassion
“ for my uncle, who ran about wringing his
“ hands, and vainly calling on his beloved
“ ungrateful daughter, had power to con-
“ fine my joy, which actually had nearly
“ suffocated me, when Wilkinson and
“ Mansel came to us, the former pressed
“ my hand with a fervency that could have
“ but one meaning—it brought the blood
“ into my cheeks—Mansel, good venera-
“ ble man—never shall I forget his looks,
“ they were rhetoric itself—The next in-
“ quiry was for aunt Win.; she was not to
“ be found. Presently Miss Edwin’s maid,
“ a prudent woman, placed about her by
“ her mother, brought in two letters, left
“ on Cecilia’s writing stand; mine you
“ have seen; what Lady Edwin’s was I
“ am

“ am yet to learn—News was that instant
“ brought that two persons had been seen
“ in the neighbourhood, plainly dressed,
“ but well mounted ; that aunt Win. had
“ met them several times ; and a farmer,
“ whose stay at the next village had been
“ protracted by his falling asleep in a state
“ of intoxication, saw, as he passed the
“ avenue to Dennis Place, a chaise and
“ four drive out very furiously, and said he
“ was sure Madam Winifred was in it, as
“ he heard her scold the driver for not
“ stopping to pick up her bonnet, which
“ by some accident had fallen out of the
“ chaise window, and which he took up ;
“ he said they were followed by two or
“ three men on horseback.

“ I heard no more—I flew to the stable
“ —my horse was fit to answer the impa-
“ tience of his rider—when I could no
“ longer outstrip the wind, I threw myself
“ into a post-chaise, and without stopping,
“ was in fifteen hours at the feet of my
“ lovely Anna.”

On this little history Mr. Herbert re-
ceived

ceived the congratulations of all present—happiness now resumed her proper seat, the habitation of virtue was no longer clouded with grief; and those hearts where philanthropy and benevolence ever dwelt, became the seat of peace.

That peace was not interrupted, though their attention was engaged in the evening by an account from Sutton House, of the death (as he was taking his tea) of its owner. This event, though expected by the faculty, was too sudden not to shock Lady Ann Trevannion.

Mr. Mordant, with Mr. Herbert, on behalf of Mr. Wilkinfon, instantly repaired there to put their respective seals on the effects, and sent off an express to Dennis Place.

The confusion and distress at Dennis Place, did not take from Wilkinfon the desire of insuring his own happiness; Sir William wished to pursue the fugitives, but Mr. Wilkinfon would not accompany him till he was actually married, lest one delay might be productive of others; they

were therefore united. The poor, Lady Edwin said, should not suffer for the folly and disobedience of Cecilia ; the intended gifts were dispensed ; and the common people regaled, though apologies were dispatched to the gentry who had been invited.

From the chapel door, Sir William and Mr. Wilkinſon ſet out on their purſuit, which they delayed with the more patience on the ſide of the Baronet, as he had no doubt but Herbert was ſet off on the ſame errand ; they eaſily traced the chaiſe to Glouceſter, where, not more to their ſurprize than her mortification, they encountered one of the runaways, juſt as ſhe was getting into a poſt-chaiſe.

Miſs Winifred Edwin was in the greateſt diſtreſs, and at ſight of Sir William her grief became vociferous ; ſhe railed againſt the deceit and ingratitude of the world to that brother, towards whom ſhe had been ſo lately guilty of both ; they gathered from her exclamations, that the journey to the north was too far advanced
for

for their utmost efforts to impede or overtake: indeed this venerable maiden had been very cruelly treated by her niece; for, taking advantage of her loving disposition, Captain Dunbar was accompanied in his perambulations about Dennis Place, by a very handsome friend, who was exceedingly smitten with aunt Winny, and prevailed on her to consent to the Captain's carrying off Cecilia, merely by way of companion to herself, as he protested he could not exist without being united to her, and promised to meet them at Gloucester; he was true to his appointment as to time and place, but was unluckily accompanied by a lady, who made up the party *quarré*, without Miss Win. and totally destroyed the sanguine hopes that poor body had entertained of entering the holy state of matrimony. This unwelcome intruder was Mrs. Edwin; the two ladies were overjoyed at meeting in such happy circumstances, and the disappointed maiden had the mortification of seeing herself deprived of her lover, ridiculed by her thoughtless

niece, laughed at by the company, and left alone in a strange place, the gentlemen not chusing to lose a moment in carrying off their golden prizes.

Poor Winifred, afraid to face her justly-enraged sister-in law, had been in the greatest dilemma where to bestow her sweet person; Mrs. Jane Mansel was recollected as her only asylum, and she was on the point of setting out for Llandore, when an end was put to that scheme by the arrival of her brother, who, much against her inclination, obliged her to return to Dennis Place, to render an account of the whole intrigue.

Sir William, finding they had so many hours start of him, and that the person his daughter had fixed on was really a gentleman, wisely resolved to follow her no farther, but leave her to the fate she chose in preference to his advice, not doubting but as she was wholly dependent on him, he should very soon hear of, or from her, and returned with Miss Winifred.

In the mean while Mrs. Herbert was in
a thousand

a thousand apprehensions for her son, which increased very much at the return of Sir William and Mr. Wilkinson, as she, having no doubt but he was in pursuit of Cecilia, expected they would return together. Mr. Mansel, in compassion to her maternal distress, which she could not conceal, gave it as his opinion, that her son was gone a very different road, and that he would venture to promise her news of him as soon as he reached Bath.

Mr. Mordant's express arrived in half an hour after Mr. Wilkinson's return, who, leaving his bride to the care of their reverend friend to follow in their own chaise, sat out by the quickest conveyance.

CHAP. XCIII.

A Disappointment.

ON Mr. Wilkinson's arrival in Bath, he was pleased, but not surprized, to meet Herbert, who accompanied him to Sutton

House ; they were there much struck to find the seals of two foreign Noblemen affixed to the drawers and cabinets in addition to their own ; and Stevens, who was yet there, informed them, an old Priest, who was high in Lord Sutton's confidence, had set out for the Continent the instant he died.

The two Noblemen, who were at Bath, attended, on being sent for ; they were men of high rank, and unimpeached honour ; and every suspicion of foul play was obviated by their respectable characters. On opening the deceased's private cabinet, the first thing they found was a will, legally signed and attested, giving the whole of his fortune, without a single legacy, to the two Foreigners, for uses which he had explained to them, and forbidding the calling to any account the Priest his confessor, as the sum he might have in his possession was a voluntary gift.

The surprize, and indeed the disappointment of young Wilkinson and his friends at this stroke, is not to be expressed ; the

two.

two Counts said, the bequest to them was so sacred, and witnessed by the Priest, it was impossible for them either to explain it or give up an article of the affers.

Stevens, who had hoped for an annuity, now petitioned for his expences to town, and was bid not only to expect that, but to make a charge of his attendance, both which they would pay; and Mr. Wilkinson having proposed to take care of Villars, he and his friend returned in dismay and astonishment to Lady Ann's.

They were not received with less cordiality for this blow; the General, who had hitherto avoided young Wilkinson, embraced and comforted him, by the assurance, that the money so vilely obtained would never have been well enjoyed; and after the first shock, the disappointment was forgotten in the reflection, that whatever happened, his Patty was taken care of; and, said Anna, my dear girls have their 5000*l.* safe.

“ Believe me,” answered Mr. Summers,
“ it is all for the best; would you have

“ had that wretch finish his corrupt career
“ with an act of justice? I confess my ha-
“ tred of him is gratified in this last piece
“ of deceit; I have no doubt, but the art-
“ ful Priest, having received his confes-
“ sion, made the whole of his fortune the
“ price of absolution, and cunningly sus-
“ pecting the interference of the legisla-
“ ture, on taking such immense property
“ out of the kingdom, prevailed on him
“ to make those noblemen his heirs, under
“ restrictions they will not dare to break
“ in a Catholic country.”

Wilkinson put on mourning, but declined attending the funeral; and Mrs. Wilkinson was received by her fond husband at Lady Ann's, instead of Sutton House.

On entering the drawing-room, how was the bride amazed to see her lost brother, one arm round the waist of Anna, the other holding a Milton, out of which he was repeating that beautiful passage,

“ With thee conversing, I forgot all time,

“ All seasons and their change, &c. &c.”

“ My

“ My Anna—my dear, dear Charles, is
“ this possible! oh, Lady Ann,” said the
mild Patty, falling at her feet, with an in-
voluntary motion, “ Is this true? and
“ will—yes, I know you will—for who
“ but you can reward a son, a brother,
“ whose duty, and whose fraternal love
“ could prevail on him to take misery to
“ his bosom?”

Mr. Mansel entered as the lovely sisters
were embracing; the good man could not
speak; he blessed, he could only bless his
Anna.

As soon as a tranquil certainty of her
brother's and her friend's happiness would
permit her, Mrs. Wilkinfon informed them
she had left her mother to comfort Lady
Edwin, who mourned, with a broken spirit,
the depravity of her children; but still,
as she avowed indulging a pleasing hope
that the honour of her house would yet be
preserved by its lineal representative, and
ascribing the disappointment of her wishes
in her own offspring to the cruelty shewn
her brother; Sir William had already re-

sumed the hospitable plan of living he delighted in ; and Mrs. Wilkinson, in the tenderness of her husband, soon forgot her reluctance at parting with her friends at Dennis Place ; as to Lord Sutton's fortune, she gave it not a second thought.

Mr. Mansel having delivered a packet with which he was charged, from Lady Edwin to Anna, she retired to read it, leaving the brother and sister to their mutual explanation, it contained as follows :

“ MY DEAREST NIECE,

“ THE disgraceful event in my family, of which your friends will inform you, would, I am sure, have drawn to me my only remaining comfort, without my asking it ; but I have many things to say and to explain, too mortifying for a personal communication, though into the bosom of candour itself.

“ Will, therefore, my dear niece forgive her unhappy aunt, for troubling her with a repetition of family grievances and disgrace, for having the fond vanity
“ of

“ of believing her advice and request will
“ be more regarded by the daughter of her
“ brother, than by her whose maturity has
“ never afforded her mother one pleasurable
“ idea ?

“ The name which you, my dear Anna,
“ bear, in a long line of illustrious ancestors,
“ has never been dishonoured by the
“ slightest tarnish, that only one received
“ by my brother Hugh’s uniting himself
“ with a plebeian being entirely done away
“ by the native dignity of his daughter ;
“ in you the virtue, as well as honour, of
“ our house is united ; that is indeed the
“ consolation of my soul under the affliction
“ it has pleased God to send me.

“ At the discovery of my son’s attachment
“ to you, which was at the instant of
“ that villainous Lord’s contrivance to
“ charge you with vices so indignant to
“ your noble blood, my own conviction
“ told me how little the hope was of driving
“ your idea from his heart by such a
“ substitute as Miss Turbville.

“ But, anxious to unite our children to
M 6 “ those

“ those whose birth and family would not
“ disgrace our own, our words were en-
“ gaged for our son, before Mr. Turbville
“ died—from that there was no receding,
“ even if the discovery of your birth had
“ preceded his marriage. So you see that
“ the steps human wisdom pointed out, as
“ the only means of preserving the dignity
“ of our family, was productive of its de-
“ basement. Had our son been left to his
“ own choice, he would have made the
“ right election; guided by us, he met
“ destruction.

“ Our daughter, undone by our indul-
“ gence, became the slave of dissipation,
“ the child of folly; unrestrained by her
“ parents, how could she be expected to
“ restrain herself? Our mistaken genero-
“ sity, operating with a weak head and
“ bad heart, soon robbed her of the chief
“ ornament of her sex; her person, from
“ its constant exhibition, became con-
“ temptible, and her character suspected;
“ instead of the proposals her rank and
“ fortune entitled her to, we had the mor-
tification

“ tification to hear her conquests were
“ among the necessitous and unworthy ;
“ our son, cut off in the thoughtless career
“ of extravagant youth, his talents, which,
“ under the guide of discretion, might
“ have been of use and ornament to his
“ country, as well as honour to his family,
“ for ever lost to both, we became the more
“ serious in our concern for Cecilia.

“ We flattered ourselves she had always
“ been attached to her cousin Charles ;
“ but we were so unhappy as to discover,
“ at a very, if not too late period, an im-
“ prudent connection, which, however, (as
“ in that moment she met our wishes in
“ avowing an unabated love for Herbert)
“ we were eager to hope might be merely
“ the effect of levity ; I therefore pro-
“ posed to Mrs. Herbert the immediate
“ match we had always in view, between
“ her son and my daughter.

“ I saw, I confess to you, Lady Ann,
“ the young man accorded to our mea-
“ sures with no impression in Miss Edwin’s
“ favour, except honour, and gratitude ;
“ but

“ but those were principles on which I
“ built stronger for indulgence, and in
“ consequence a permanent reformation
“ in Cecilia, than on mere passion. I
“ knew our love and liberality would be
“ united to his fortune, for our general
“ happiness; and on those grounds, I had
“ the cruelty to persist in what I had too
“ many reasons to know the heart of the
“ amiable youth recoiled at, because no
“ other plan occurred that gave the most
“ distant hope of preserving what was left
“ of the honour of my posterity.

“ This selfish conduct met its reward in
“ a total disappointment, by the elope-
“ ment of my daughter.

“ I inclose you her letter—read it here,
“ Lady Ann, by way of support to the
“ request I am going to make, which is,
“ that compassion for my feelings may be
“ added to the sense of what you owe the
“ family you solely represent, so as to pre-
“ vail on you to take the only step, that
“ will enable me again to meet the eyes of
“ my countrymen.

“ You

“ You must bring to Trevannion House
“ a chief worthy of such vassals.

“ You are rich enough in your own
“ right, to chuse even among the indigent,
“ a person you can love ; nevertheless, as
“ the affections of one so unfortunately
“ situated, though for Lady Ann Trevan-
“ nion, will appear in a more questionable
“ light, than that of a man, who possesses
“ in his own fortune, a right to chuse,—
“ the least to be suspected is the last.

“ But I pretend not to dictate ; all I ask
“ of you is to marry with condition, that
“ the happy object of your choice shall
“ change his name to that of Trevannion ;
“ at the same time taking care, that the
“ one he gives up, is equally respectable—
“ on this, my dear niece, depend all my
“ present hopes ; tell me you will oblige,
“ and render happy,

“ Your distressed aunt,

“ C. EDWIN.”

To Lady EDWIN.

(Inclosed in the foregoing.)

“ MADAM,

“ AS this is the last imprudence Cecilia
“ Edwin can be guilty of, I entreat my
“ papa’s and your pardon for it. I leave
“ my family at a critical time to them, as
“ well as myself; the truth is, our blood
“ has from generation to generation, by
“ flowing in the same regular channel, at
“ last wearied itself by its own sameness,
“ and Mr. Dunbar assures me, *his* is no
“ less respectable; so that a little change
“ will be an advantage to both; I hope,
“ therefore, on reflection, you will forgive
“ the act on account of the motive.

“ Your dutiful daughter,

“ C. EDWIN.”

Anna read the packet with different emotions. Lady Edwin had but one fault, if her bigoted regard to the honour of her family

family could be so called. She was a woman, whose practice of every noble principle sanctified her pride of blood; and the calamities of her domestic circle were the more humiliating, as conscious of no one deviation from the virtue of her ancestors herself, in thought, or act, she was the farther from apprehending it in her children, till conviction accompanied the certainty of interference being now too late; the blood of Trevannion, the thought, would secure them equally from vice and meanness; the maxims and greatness of soul she had derived from her father, had been carefully delivered to her children; forgetting it was in the family mansion, and its environs only, they had been preserved un sullied, and that the great world was too crowded with artificial virtues, to give place to real ones; not aware that example from the multitude was far more prevalent on the minds of prosperous youth, than the dry precepts of individuals, her grief was too respectable, her disappointment too keen, to be disregarded

disregarded by her niece. The request of Lady Edwin pictured the amiable Charles; Sir William's estate was entailed on him in default of male issue; his family was as ancient and respectable as that of Trevannion, of which indeed it was a branch; his name, dishonoured by his father's unhappy end, would be of less consequence in its change, as that of Trevannion had been the one from which his family spring.

Thus, then, the man of her choice was him most suitable to her situation; but whether, after being so circumstanced with Cecilia, Lady Edwin might approve their union, was doubtful.

CHAP. XCIV.

Conclusion.

AT Lady Ann's return to the company, her looks were examined by her fond Herbert; he read in them an anxiety he was impatient

impatient to remove ; and, at his earnest request, she gave her aunt's letter into the hands of Mr. Mordant—the contents were highly pleasing to that gentleman. Having obtained her permission, he set off next morning for Dennis Place, accompanied by Mr. Herbert. Soon did that happy lover return to escort his beloved and her friends to Lady Edwin ; and the real heiress of Trevannion was met by the tenants and vassals of her estate, and followed through two counties by the acclamations and unfeigned joy of the honest, unconquered, though uncultivated, Cambrians.

Sir William and Lady Edwin, equally gratified, and mutually happy in the union of their amiable nephew and niece, resigned themselves to the will of heaven in the disposal of their children, and felt nothing but joy in the more fortunate lot of their next dear relatives.

Mrs. Herbert—but why need I speak of her, when I have yet to say, her son was the happiest of men, and her daughter the
most

most contented of women ; could the remainder of her life then be otherwise than one scene of devout transport and grateful joy ? In her afflictions, she was respected ; and in her prosperity, deservedly beloved.

As soon as the writings were ready, and the forms gone through on account of the change of name, to which was annexed the family honours, the voluntary favour, it was said, of a Prince, whose great misfortune it is, that his own judgment is too seldom a recommendation to the dignity he bestows, the Earl and Countess of Trevannion were publicly united in the family chapel.

The noble heiress soon became the idol of her country ; and Lady Edwin exulted in the revival of her family dignity.

Miss Edwin, now Mrs. Dunbar, in a very short time, became a petitioner, and obtained a pardon, which ever preceded asking in the heart of her fond father ; and Captain Dunbar being second son to an Irish peer, Lady Edwin, condescended to receive him, and consented to the establishment

blishment of her daughter on the most liberal and generous plan. The ladies were both returned with their husbands to Portman-square, from whence Mrs. Dunbar removed, as soon as Sir William's remittance enabled her. To this step indeed she was rather precipitated by the hurry Mr. Mellish was in to visit his lady's seat in Shropshire; whither he had not the good nature towards his wife, or the politeness to her friend, to invite her.

Captain Dunbar was wild and dissipated; he soon run out the first sum advanced by his father-in-law; and another was asked, and granted, but his demands increasing with the generosity of the noble-spirited baronet, he at last thought proper to restrain a bounty, that must in the end injure, instead of serving his daughter, more especially as her pregnancy was announced.

Sir William Edwin was all good-nature and liberality, till he suspected an imposition; but when once he saw a mean advantage was taken of his open temper, he instantly turned to the other extreme, and
was

was as obstinately impenetrable to such applications, as he had before been generous and complying.

Captain Dunbar, young, thoughtless, and extravagant, was soon weary of a contracted income and an expensive wife; and finding himself too idle to reform, or lessen his expences, he privately changed for advanced rank in the West-Indies, and left his lady to take her own methods with her relations.

The young and lovely Countess of Trevannion, no less respected than admired in the great world, and beloved and adored in her own county and connexions; and her husband not more dignified by his rank and abilities, than esteemed for the rectitude of his principles and the benignity of his disposition; were objects too galling for Mrs. Dunbar to meet in her present circumstances—while, therefore, she waited the determination of her parents, refusing the offered asylum at Dennis Place, she chose to ask one with Mrs. Mellish in Shropshire; but that partner in her imprudence

dence had not power to give the welcome she expected.

Captain Mellish, when he took his lady into the country, had no intentions to return, and much less to suffer her to keep up any of her connections; the situation of his lady was no less unpleasingly altered, though in a different manner, than that of her friend; for Captain Mellish was, in the other extreme, as penurious as Dunbar was extravagant; and as Mrs. Mellish did not breed, all his attention was towards saving out of her income what, in case of her death, would console him for her estate, which, if she died childless, was settled on the next heir, then abroad: here then was no place for Mrs. Dunbar; who returned to London in high dudgeon with her friend Mellish.

Mrs. Mellish, on her part, thus cut off from all that she had been used to esteem valuable in life, stinted in every article of expence, even to common necessaries, shut out from the pleasures of amusement, and debarred of the joys of society, took to the
only

only method that could punish the contracted vice of her husband, by depriving him of her income; she gave herself up to drinking cordials and strong waters when she could procure them, and when she could not, drams and liquors of a more vulgar kind were substituted in their stead. Her health soon became affected by this fatal resource. Mellish, destitute of feeling and good-nature, was equally callous to reproach, and regardless of her complaints, till seriously alarmed at the danger in which she soon was, the avarice which had destroyed, sought to preserve her existence. How could he bear to part with a wife, whose death would deprive him of such a fortune? With anxious wishes for her recovery, her emaciated body was vainly moved from place to place, at the direction of the doctors, who were promised mountains if she recovered. She fell an early victim to her own unguarded folly and his unfeeling avarice.

Mrs. Dunbar continuing obstinate in her refusals to return to Wales, her parents
were

were at last prevailed on to allow her a handsome annuity ; and Lady Edwin took into her own care the child. She was very happy to be eased of the trouble of bringing it up. It was a female, and named after herself.

Thus once more in possession of the means of living in rank, her house was crowded, as her doors were opened to that kind of indiscriminate company which would disgrace a private party, but which were of a certain set, and therefore not wholly contemptible. With great cunning she soon acquired some experience, and blending one with the other, had the dexterity to make the junction pass for wit. She was yet young, genteel, and had not a bad face ; was cautious, but not suspected of prudery ; in short, she maintained a kind of doubtful character, too suspicious for the pure un sullied soul of innocence, and too guarded for the positive stamp of guilt.

Mr. Wilkinson and his lovely bride re-
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tired, contented with their lot, to Llandore, where Mrs. Herbert's home was, though her frequent excursions to her son's almost rendered it merely nominal. The prosperous state of the Iron-works was a mine of riches more acceptable, and far more honourable, than that they had missed in Sutton's wealth. The provision Mr. Wilkin-son promised Villars, was supplied by Mr. Summers, who was of such a preposterous turn, that he fancied even she, in comparison of some part of the world, might be virtuous; at least, he would preserve her from the temptations to guilt; an act of humanity he did not live to repent. The remainder of his days, which were spent at Trevannion House, were unruffled by a single grief, and uninterrupted by care, he finished his life in the arms of the young Earl, and his change from this world, to that he had been long prepared to enter, was unmarked by one groan, or rendered shocking to his friends by one convulsive struggle; the placid smile of true benevo-
lence

lence dwelt on his features after life had ceased to animate them. The bulk of his fortune he left to the Countess and her children, with handsome legacies to those of Mr. Wilkinfon.

Mrs. Wellers left Lady Trevannion but for a short period ; she had the misfortune to lose her valuable husband soon after her return to Layton ; and the grateful heart she had so often soothed, would not suffer her to feel sorrow alone ; Lord Trevannion himself fetched her to his beloved Anna, whose then situation would not admit of her travelling ; and the good woman experienced the regard of her noble friends, in the confidence the whole family reposed in her son. All their money concerns were intrusted to Mr. Wellers ; a circumstance however of equal advantage to both parties ; since the large sums constantly in his hands, could not be more profitable to him, as a speculative man, than his strict probity and exact honesty, as well as invariable regularity, was to them.

Eliza Melmoth continued to receive the advantage of the instructions and example of Lady Trevannion, till she entered her seventeenth year, when she gave her hand to young Mordant, who, on that occasion, with his father, settled in their native country.

Lady Cecilia, gratified in her family pride, was wholly wrapt up in her niece, and fully employed in educating the young Cecilia, after her model, in hopes to make her worthy to share the heart of the heir of Trevannion.

Lord Trevannion, by degrees, divested Sir William Edwin of his prejudices, and changed his opposition to the minister, into a patriotic zeal for the good of his country, and the honour of his prince, which he at length convinced him were synonymous terms.

Himself, a watchful and independent guardian of the privileges and benefits of the nation at large, and his own county in particular,

particular, not urged by prejudice, nor restrained by interested considerations, he either supported, or opposed, men and measures, as they appeared to have in view the general good ; his honour was above price ; and his principles secured from temptation by that noble pride which, scorning obligation, regulated his wishes to his power. Many possessed greater estates ; but those whose rent rolls were ten times larger, were neither so affluent nor so happy as he ; because he was generous, and because he was just ; his wife, the fond choice of his early years, is yet the object of his adoration ; her beauty, striking as it is, is her least attraction ; and her high rank and affluent fortune creates not that respect, which is paid to her excellent heart and refined understanding.

Blest with the full gratification of their wishes in the possession of each other, and happy in a beauteous offspring, surrounding, like olive branches, their hospitable

pitiable board, they yet live, and may they
long do so, adored by each other,
Venerated by their Children,
Esteemed by their Friends,
Beloved and honoured by their Country.

F I N I S.

By the same Author.

ELLEN
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWELL.
4 VOLS.

JUVENILE INDISCRETION.
5 VOLS.

In the Press,

THE BEGGAR GIRL.
6 VOLS.



